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NEW CHAMPIONS

CHANGE IS COMING

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What do four kids whose lives were derailed by Hydra, Scarlet Witch's mysterious protégé, a cursed Roller Derby jammer and a Wakandan runaway have in common? Not much! But when Hellrune's mysterious powers activate to bring them together, they'll have to learn how to work as a team quickly — or face the wrath of the Cult of Hela! Young heroes are summoned from far and wide, but who among them has what it takes to become a New Champion? That's the name they'll adopt, but it doesn't belong to them — and the previous Champions will definitely have something to say about that! Plus: Will meeting the Avengers live up to expectations? Will Nightdrifter be friend or foe? And will the lives of the New Champions be cut cruelly short by Hela, the goddess of Death?!

Collecting *New Champions (2025) #1-8* — by Steve Foxe, Ivan Fiorelli, Ig Guara, Ruairí Coleman, Elisabetta D'Amico, Adriano Di Benedetto and Arthur Hesli.

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MARVEL

NEW CHAMPIONS

CHANGE IS COMING

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CHANGE IS *COMING*

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1

MENNIKOV 2024.
delgado

San Francisco.

The Brothers Grimm.

BOTHERSOME CRIME DUO.

DID WE HAVE TO TAKE THE ***ENTIRE*** VAULT? IT'S HEAVY!

THE ALARM WAS DRIVING ME ***NUTS.*** JUST LIFT YOUR END UP AND ***LET'S GO!***

WHIZZ

HUH?

AWW, C'MON-- ***MOON KNIGHT?*** WE'LL BLOW THE WHOLE TAKE ON OUR ***HOSPITAL BILL.***

NO ONE SAID HE WAS BACK IN CALIFORNIA!

NAH, NOT MOON ***KNIGHT.***

AND DEFINITELY ***NOT*** THE AVENGERS...

WEST COAST, YOUNG OR OTHERWISE.

THEY WISH.

YOU CAN LET YOUR CRIMINAL PALS KNOW...

...THERE ARE NEW CHAMPIONS IN TOWN!

AWW, YEAH!

Moon Squire.
ABSORBS LIGHT AND MAKES BAD GUYS GO NIGHT-NIGHT.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *OLD* CHAMP--?

Liberty.
BEACON OF HOPE (AND HARD-LIGHT CONSTRUCTS).

I'VE GOT THE VAULT!

Cadet Marvel.
JET-POWERED PUNCHES, FUEL-INJECTED ATTITUDE.

SKULL BROS ARE *FRACTURED!*

KRAKA-BOOM

Hellrune.
MYSTERY SPEAR, MYSTERY SPELLS, MYSTERY ORIGIN.

AND *THAT* SHOULD BIND THEM UNTIL THE COPS SHOW UP.

(AND PROBABLY FOR A *LONG* TIME AFTER THAT. STILL WORKING IT OUT--SORRY.)

AHH!

YOU GUYS--WE TOOK THEM DOWN, LIKE, *SO* FAST! AND WITH SUCH GOOD TEAMWORK! I'M *SO PROUD* OF HOW FAR WE'VE COME SINCE--

LIB, *COME ON*--NOT RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE VILLAINS...

WE GOT OUR @#$% KICKED BY *TWEEN SIDEKICKS.

SIDEKICKS ON THEIR *OWN!* THAT'S *EXTRA* EMBARRASSING.

YO, WE'VE GOTTA WRAP THIS UP ANYWAY.

IT'S GETTING LATE--MY MOMS WILL MURDER ME IF I'M NOT HOME FOR DINNER.

AWW, *OKAY*--AT LEAST IT WAS AN EVENTFUL PATROL!

AND I AM *SUPER* CLOSE TO FINISHING THAT *HUGE* SURPRISE I WAS TELLING ALL OF YOU ABOUT!

IS IT A NEW CHAMPIONS MOBILE? BECAUSE TAKING THE BUS HOME IS GETTING OLD FAST.

MUST SUCK TO BE ***GROUNDED.*** GUESS YOU SHOULD'VE UNLOCKED AN EGYPTIAN SKY GOD INSTEAD.

FLINGING YOURSELF INTO THE AIR SUPER-FAST ISN'T THE SAME THING AS FLYING, EMILIO.

=SIGH=

WHAT ABOUT YOU, RUNIE--ANY FUN PLANS TONIGHT?

HAH--IF YOU CALL ***AWKWARD SMALL TALK*** WITH MY NEW FOSTERS AND SPENDING THE REST OF THE NIGHT IN MY ROOM "FUN," THEN, YEAH, A TOTAL ***RIOT*** AWAITS ME...

OH...

ACTUALLY, WHY DON'T WE ***EXTEND*** OUR PATROL--JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE?

WE'RE KIND OF ON A ROLL ANYWAY!

LIB, YOU KNOW MY DAD'S SERIOUSLY STRICT ABOUT SCHOOL NIGHTS UNLESS THERE'S, LIKE, A ***SKRULL INVASION.***

PRETTY SURE THOSE NUMBSKULLS BACK THERE ***AREN'T*** SKRULLS.

IT'S FINE, REALLY.

IN FACT, I NEED TO PRACTICE MY TELEPORTATION SPELL. WHY DON'T I SAVE YOU GUYS SOME TROUBLE?

WAIT, "PRACTICE"? MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST TAKE THE BUS AFTER ALL--

CAW

CAW

CAW

AH, JAREN-- WIPE THOSE BOOTS BEFORE YOU COME IN THIS HOUSE!

SORRY, MA!

OOOH, JAREN'S IN TROUBLE!

<THE VENT KEEPS OVERHEATING HERE, I CAN'T FIGURE OUT-->*

<MIRANDA MONTEIRO! YOU ARE SMARTER THAN THAT.>

<YOUR DESIGN IS EXACTLY RIGHT-- THE OUTPUTS ARE JUST SWAPPED.>

*TRANSLATED FROM BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE.

BUT ***WHY*** DO I NEED TO KNOW WHAT THE WALLPAPER, LIKE, ***REPRESENTS*** OR WHATEVER? CAN'T IT JUST BE WALLPAPER?!

HIJO, LEARNING TO EXPRESS YOURSELF ***CAN*** MAKE YOU A BETTER LEADER.

NOW LET'S GO OVER THE CHAPTER AGAIN...

CAW

CAW

=SIIIIIGH=

I'M HOME AND GOING TO MY ROOM DON'T NEED DINNER ALREADY ATE THANKS!

ERR, HELLRUNE? IS THAT YOU--?

I THOUGHT WE TALKED ABOUT NOT LETTING THE NEIGHBORS SEE THOSE MAGIC HERO BIRDS OF YOURS, BUT I UNDERSTAND--

SLAM

--YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT SINCE THE *HYDRA* THING.

SHE LOST YEARS OF HER LIFE TO THOSE MONSTERS, HONEY. WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO GIVE HER TIME.

KRAK-AK

SORRY, MR. AND MRS. McCORMICK.

YOU'RE SOME OF THE ***NICER*** FOSTERS I'VE HAD, AND I ***HATE*** LETTING YOU THINK I'M JUST DEALING WITH HYDRA TRAUMA*...

...BUT A ***MAGIC SPEAR*** SHOWED UP OUT OF NOWHERE ON MY 13TH BIRTHDAY. THAT'S BEEN MESSING WITH MY HEAD WAY LONGER THAN ANY GREEN-HAIRED FASCIST CHICKS.

*SEE ***SPIDER-WOMAN (2023) #7-10!*** --ALANNA

THE ONLY WAY I'LL FIND OUT WHY I GOT THIS THING--AND LEARN ***EVERYTHING IT CAN DO***--IS IF I TRACK DOWN MY ***REAL*** FAMILY.

SO LET'S SEE IF THE ***SCOUTS*** FINALLY FOUND ANY ***LEADS.***

VRROOOM

CAW CAW

CAW. AW

CAW

CAW

SERIOUSLY? NOTHING *AGAIN?*

IT'S BEEN *MONTHS* OF SENDING YOU GUYS OUT, AND--

CAW

HUH?

MY...MY *AUNT?*

I HAVE AN AUNT?

TAKE ME TO HER. *NOW.*

CAW CAW CAW

Yo--did Runie seem extra down to you guys earlier?

We all got our families back and she turned out to be an ***orphan.***

Even I can figure ***that*** out, Jaren. It's not ***rocket science.***

Emilio!!! Don't be mean!

Even if Runie doesn't have her bio family, she still has us.

Besides--I've been talking to my parents.

If ***this*** foster doesn't work out, they're open to Runie moving in ***here.*** They agree with me...

...Runie needs somewhere she can feel like she ***belongs.***

CAW

CAW

CAW

THESE CARVINGS... THEY MUST BE ***ANCIENT.***

IF I HAVE ROOTS HERE, WHO ***KNOWS*** HOW POWERFUL MY FAMILY TREE MIGHT BE!

=SNOOOORE=

HUH?

AWW, C'MON, WHAT TIME IS IT EVEN?!

COULDN'T YOU HAVE AT LEAST ***TEXTED*** FIRST?!

LIB, DID YOU JUST PARK A ***FLYING SAUCER*** ON MY DAD'S LAWN?! DO YOU ***WANT*** ME TO BE GROUNDED FOR THE NEXT DECADE?!

YOU'RE LUCKY WE DON'T HAVE ANY NEIGHBORS OUT HERE!

THIS WAS MY *BIG SURPRISE*-- I DIDN'T WANT RUNIE TO FEEL LIKE WE WERE RELYING ON HER TO MAGIC US AROUND, AND TAKING THE BUS WAS JUST GETTING *SAD*, SO I'VE BEEN TINKERING WITH THIS IN MY SPARE TIME.

SPARE TIME...

BUT NONE OF THAT'S IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW.

DON'T BE MAD, BUT I MAAAY HAVE PUT *INVISIBLE HARD-LIGHT TRACERS* ON EVERYONE'S COSTUMES-- *JUST IN CASE ANYTHING BAD HAPPENED!*

FWOMP

YOU MICROCHIPPED US LIKE RESCUE DOGS?! WITHOUT TELLING US?

YEAH, I KNOW. I ALREADY CHEWED HER OUT ABOUT IT. *NOT COOL.*

I GET IT, I SHOULD HAVE ASKED FIRST! BUT THE POINT IS--I THINK SOMETHING BAD *DID* HAPPEN TO RUNIE.

LATE LAST NIGHT, HELLRUNE'S SIGNAL SUDDENLY BLIPPED TO AN *ISLAND* OFF THE COAST OF NORWAY--

--AND THEN IT *WENT DEAD.*

A LOT OF ***ANCIENT NORSE ARTIFACTS*** WERE FOUND ON EARTH IN THAT AREA. I THINK RUNIE'S LOOKING FOR HISTORY RELATED TO HER SPEAR--AND HER FAMILY LINE.

BUT WHY WOULDN'T SHE ASK US TO COME WITH HER?

MAYBE SHE DOESN'T FEEL LIKE SHE ***CAN?*** I MEAN, YOU'RE RIGHT, CADET--OUR FAMILIES WERE ***BRAINWASHED*** INTO FORGETTING US, BUT THREE OUT OF FOUR OF US GOT OUR FAMILIES ***BACK.***

WE'RE BACK TO "NORMAL," BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN RUNIE ***LIKES*** HER "NORMAL."

ARE YOU SURE WE CAN'T JUST BLAME THIS ON HYDRA? BECAUSE I CAN ***PUNCH*** HY--

CAW CAW

BRING ME THE NEW CHAMPIONS!

BRING ME THE NEW CHAMPIONS!

HELLRUNE'S BIRDS!

IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE SAYING--

BRING ME THE NEW CHAMPIONS!

BRING ME THE NEW CHAMPIONS!

THIS IS **NOT** CALIFORNIA...

NO KIDDING. I THINK HELLRUNE'S BIRDS JUST SAVED LIB A TON OF FUEL FOR HER LITTLE STARSHIP.

OH CRAP, MY DAD'S GOING TO ***FREAK*** WHEN HE FINDS IT IN THE YARD--

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, THE ***STAR-SPINNER*** RUNS ON COMPLETELY RENEWABLE AMBIENT ENERGY ABSORPTION VIA--

SHH--DO YOU HEAR THAT?

HEAYAH WHAA?

LIKE METAL CLANKING...

I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING, BUT IT DOES SMELL ***RANK*** IN THIS DIRECTION. LIKE SOMETHING CRAWLED INTO THIS BOG AND DIED A ZILLION YEARS AGO.

HEEELLAAAAA...

AHH!

ZOMBIE VIKING!

SPLORCH

ZOMBIES! THOR ZOMBIES!

NORSE ZOMBIES. WE'D BE IN MUCH WORSE TROUBLE IF THESE WERE ASGARDIAN LICHS.

WHATEVER! THEY'RE UNDEAD, HAVE HORNS ON THEIR HELMETS...

HEELLARRGGHH...

...AND WANT TO EAT OUR BRAINS!

SHOOM

LIBERTY, WATCH OUT!

WHIP-
WHIP-
WHIP-

HRMMH?

ICE ZOMBIES? KISS MY FLAMES.

Fantasma.
SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE-ISH. PROBABLY.

YANK-

SPLURCK

UHH... DID SHE SUMMON THE DEATH-METAL-ALBUM-COVER UNDEAD?

I DON'T THINK SHE'D BE FIGHTING AGAINST THEM IF SHE HAD!

ME LLAMO FANTASMA.

MY TEAM WAS ABOUT TO WIN ITS ROLLER DERBY BOUT WHEN SOME GLOWING BLUE BIRDS CARRIED ME AWAY AND DROPPED ME IN THIS SWAMP.

US TOO!

WELL, NOT THE ROLLER DERBY PART. BUT THE BIRDS BELONG TO OUR FRIEND--

RUSTLE RUSTLE

--HELLRUNE?!

I'M SO SORRY.

HEY, TAKE IT EASY--WE'VE GOT YOU.

THIS IS ALL *MY* FAULT.

APOLOGY ***NOT*** ACCEPTED. I COULD HAVE GONE MY ***WHOLE LIFE*** WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT A ZOMBIE SMELLED LIKE UP CLOSE!

I DON'T KNOW ***ANY*** OF YOU AND I STILL KNOW THAT WAS ***RUDE AS HELLFIRE.***

I'VE BEEN SENDING OUT RAVEN SCOUTS--TRYING TO FIND ***MY FAMILY.*** ONE BROUGHT ME TO THIS ISLAND, BUT IT...IT WAS SOME SORT OF ***TRAP.***

I WALKED RIGHT INTO A ***RITUAL SIGIL*** USED FOR RESURRECTING THESE UNDEAD VIKINGS AND TROLLS AND STUFF.

AWW, RUNIE--THAT'S ACTUALLY ***REALLY SWEET*** THAT YOU THOUGHT OF US.

SO SWEET. BUT YOUR BIG TOOTHPICK THERE ***REEKS*** OF CURSED ENERGY. AND WITH CURSE MAGIC, YOU NEED TO BE VERY EXACT.

HOW SPECIFICALLY DID YOU WORD YOUR COMMAND? 'CAUSE I NEVER SIGNED UP FOR YOUR LITTLE CLUB ROSTER.

"TROLLS"?!

UHH... NOT VERY?

I BARELY ESCAPED, AND WHEN I DID, I ASKED MY SPEAR TO ***BRING ME THE NEW CHAMPIONS.***

I KNOW LIB GAVE US COMMUNICATORS, BUT THE SIGNAL WAS DEAD AND I...I REALLY NEEDED HELP.

Spider-Boy.
WEB-LESS WONDER. NOT USUALLY ALLOWED TO FIGHT UNDEAD TROLLS.

WATCH OUT!

CRASH

WAS THAT SPIDER-BOY?

WAS THAT A TROLL ZOMBIE?

OKAY, PROMISE WE'RE NOT PILING ON RIGHT NOW, BUT--HOW MANY ***LOWERCASE-N, LOWERCASE-C NEW CHAMPIONS*** DID YOUR BIRDS GRAB, HELLRUNE?

JUDGING BY THE RUCKUS THROUGH THE TREE LINE THERE...

OH NO.

LOOK AT IT THIS WAY--AS LONG AS WE SURVIVE THE ZOMBIE VIKINGS...

"...THIS WILL MAKE FOR AN AWESOME *RECRUITMENT DRIVE!*"

Before.

OKAY, SO-- YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHAT THE DEAL IS.

ARE WE ***THE ASSEMBLY,*** OR ARE WE NOT THE ASSEMBLY? DID WE ***BLOW UP*** AN ISLAND, AND ARE WE LEGALLY CULPABLE FOR THAT? IT'S A ***LOT*** TO HANDLE.

DO WE ***HAVE*** TO DO THIS, LIB? WE DON'T ***OWE*** THESE PEOPLE ANYTHING.

IT'S BAD ENOUGH THOSE FREAKISH A.I. "ORIGIN" VIDEOS HYDRA MADE OF US ARE STILL ONLINE...

NO WAY, WE SHOULD KEEP THIS UP--SOCIAL MEDIA SUPER-HERO STUFF WORKED OUT ***GREAT*** FOR THE NEW WARR--

WHOA, TOO SOON.

DEFINITELY MARKING THE TIME STAMP TO EDIT ***THAT*** OUT.

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT, I DON'T NEED ***HATERS*** BEFORE I HAVE ***FANS.***

ANYWAY. AS I WAS SAYING...

"...A LOT OF YOU KNOW US AS ***THE ASSEMBLY,*** SAN FRANCISCO'S PREMIER TEEN TEAM!

"WE BURST ONTO THE SCENE WITH ***TITAN*** AS OUR LEADER.

"ONLY...TURNS OUT TITAN WASN'T WHO HE SAID HE WAS.

"HIS TRUE IDENTITY ISN'T WORTH GETTING INTO--"

HE WAS AN EVIL-GENIUS RUSSIAN MUTANT WHO IRON MAN THOUGHT HE KILLED BUT TURNS OUT HE DIDN'T AND THEN HE WORKED FOR HYDRA AND--

"DON'T GIVE ***GREMLIN*** THE PUBLICITY! THEY CAN WIKI HIM IF THEY WANT.*

*OR CHECK OUT ***SPIDER-WOMAN BY STEVE FOXE VOL. 2: THE ASSEMBLY*** FOR ALL THE DETAILS!

"BUT CADET MARVEL IS RIGHT--WE ***WERE*** BEING MANIPULATED.

"BY ***HYDRA,*** WHO HAD A PROGRAM TO TARGET KIDS WITH SPECIAL ABILITIES.

"THOSE TERRORISTS TOOK US FROM OUR FAMILIES YEARS AGO, MESSED WITH OUR MEMORIES AND TRIED TO TURN US INTO SLEEPER AGENTS.

"THANKFULLY, ***SPIDER-WOMAN*** HELPED FREE US FROM HYDRA'S CONTROL.

"(AND WE DID KIND OF BLOW UP ***ALCATRAZ,*** BUT IT WAS INSURED, AND NO ONE WHO ***DIDN'T*** WORK FOR HYDRA GOT INJURED.)

"SPIDER-WOMAN ALSO PUT US IN TOUCH WITH SOMEONE WHO COULD HELP ***TRACK DOWN*** THE FAMILIES THAT HYDRA HAD HIDDEN FROM US...

"...AND DEPROGRAM THE ***BRAINWASHING*** THAT KEPT THEM FROM REMEMBERING WHO WE WERE.

"IT'S TAKEN ***A LOT*** OF THERAPY AND HARD WORK, BUT WE'RE NOT LETTING OURSELVES BE DEFINED BY WHAT WAS ***DONE TO US.***

"WE'RE TAKING BACK OUR LIVES."

MOST OF US, ANYWAY.

"WE DIDN'T REALLY BECOME HEROES ON *OUR OWN* TERMS. WE DIDN'T GET THE OPTION OF 'SECRET IDENTITIES' WITH OUR FAMILIES.

"HYDRA TOOK *THOSE* CHOICES AWAY FROM US.

"BUT THE FACT IS THAT WE *DO* HAVE EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES--AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THE WORLD A *BETTER, SAFER PLACE.*

"AND TO BE HONEST? WE HAVE A LOT TO LEARN.

"BUT WE'RE COMMITTED TO *DOING THE WORK.*"

SO DON'T WORRY, RUNIE--WE'RE *NOT* GOING TO KEEP POSTING THESE. THIS WAS JUST A ONE-TIME MESSAGE TO TELL THE WORLD THAT THE ASSEMBLY?

YEAH, THAT'S A THING OF *THE PAST.* BUT AS A WISE (AND VERY SARCASTIC) ARACHNID-THEMED WOMAN ONCE TOLD US...

...THE WORLD WILL ALWAYS NEED *NEW CHAMPIONS.*

AND NOW WE'RE READY TO *CHANGE THE WORLD.*

THAT WAS *TORTURE.* SO WHAT'S THE DINNER PLAN? IT'D BETTER BE GOOD.

WE COULD ORDER PIZZA TO MY PLACE?

AND SHARE WITH YOUR SISTERS AGAIN? NO WAY!

MY DAD IS MAKING MOQUECA!

OKAY, THAT CAST ITS SPELL ON ME--LET'S GO!

AWW, YEAH!

THE BEGINNING...

2

An island off the coast of Norway.

I MESSED UP. I MESSED UP *BIG TIME.*

YOU WERE *TRICKED,* RUNIE--IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

Hellrune.
UNEXPLAINED MAGICS, UNRESTRAINED GUILT.

Moon Squire.
MASTER TACTICIAN, EVEN BETTER FRIEND.

OH, COME ON, JAREN--THIS IS *DEFINITELY* HER FAULT.

SHE SUMMONED US TO THIS SWAMP ISLAND!

CODENAMES ONLY IN THE FIELD! ALSO--DON'T BE MEAN!

RUNIE WAS LOOKING FOR HER FAMILY! THAT'S A GOOD REASON!

Cadet Marvel.
HIGH ALTITUDE, HIGH ATTITUDE.

Liberty.
HARD LIGHT, SOFT HEART.

LET'S SAVE THIS AWKWARD BLAME GAME FOR AFTER...

...WE SEND THESE DEAD-SICLES BACK TO HELL!

Fantasma.
ROLLER DERBY DEMON, RATHER NEW ALLY.

FANTASMA'S RIGHT--**NEW CHAMPIONS,** LET'S SHOW THEM WHAT WE'VE GOT!

NEW WHAT NOW?

JUST SMASH THE ZOMBIES AND WE'LL SORT IT OUT LATER.

THE NEW CHAMPIONS.
APPARENTLY.

HELLRUNE...

HUH? WHO IS--?

FOLLOW MY VOICE, HELLRUNE...

...FOLLOW YOUR DESTINY...

...AND **RELEASE ME.**

NOT TO STEREOTYPE, BUT YOU'VE GOT A WITCHY THING GOING ON, YEAH?

CAN'T YOU *HOCUS-POCUS* THESE ZOMBIES AWAY?

Amaranth. NEUTRALIZES MAGIC, IMPARTS MADNESS.

I'M, *UHM*-- STILL LEARNING SPELLCRAFT.

(AND YOU TOTALLY *DID* JUST STEREOTYPE ME.)

BUT I CAN *CANCEL OUT MYSTIC ENERGY...*

...WHICH I HAD A SNEAKING SUSPICION MIGHT DUST THIS SHAMBLING ABOMINATION.

SICK! NOW DO THAT, LIKE, FIFTY MORE TIMES!

FWASHOOM

Hulkette.
GAMMA-CHARGED, CHI-FOCUSED.

YOU GUYS SMASH **WAY** TOO EASILY! NO CHALLENGE AT ALL!

SPLACK

NOW YOU SEE THEM--

--NOW YOU DON'T.

HRRUGH?

Monte.
SLEIGHT OF HAND, SHARP OF TONGUE.

I'M OLD ENOUGH TO BE THESE KIDS' CHAPERONE...

Nightshade.
COMMAND OVER BODY CHEMISTRY, ANNOYANCE OVER SITUATION.

FWOOSH

Spider-Boy.
NOT ALLOWED TO BE DOING ANY OF THIS. LOVING ALL OF THIS.

I SAW YOU TAKE DOWN A BUNCH ON YOUR OWN! WHY AM I GIVING YOU A PIGGYBACK RIDE?!

WOO! GO FASTER!

Kid Juggernaut.
ALMOST NOTHING CAN STOP HIM, EXCEPT EMBARRASSMENT.

HERE, TAKE MY HAND!

Gold Tiger.
LIKES SHINY THINGS, MAKES HER OWN.

AH, I AM NOT CORNERED, PRETTY FLYING GIRL! AND TRUST ME--

GRAAARRRGHHHH.

AARRGGGH...

YEEAARRGHH...

--YOU WOULD NOT WANT TO FEEL *MY TOUCH* RIGHT NOW.

UNLESS YOU WOULD LIKE A *SOLID-GOLD* MAKEOVER.

HUZZUUMMMM

GRRARGHH...

LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT THIS HANDLED!

NOW LET ME SHARPEN MY CLAWS AGAINST THESE DUSTY OLD BONES--

WHIP-WHIP-

WHIP-WHIP-

WHIP-WHIP-

MIND IF I CUT IN?

WHIP-SPLURK

I CAN PUT DOWN THE UNDEAD ALL NIGHT, BUT THIS IS GETTING RIDICULOUS.

THE GROUND UNDER OUR FEET IS ***SATURATED*** WITH THE BONES OF VIKING WARRIORS. WE NEED TO ***CUT THIS OFF AT THE SOURCE*** OR WE'LL BE OVERWHELMED.

I CAN STOP THIS!

OVER... WHELMED... YES, I BELIEVE I AM...

SKHHHK

AT LEAST... I THINK I CAN?

STAND TALL, HELLRUNE. *STAND TRUE.*

OKAY, I'VE NEVER ONCE SEEN A *GOOD GUY* WEARING HORNS AND A HOODED CLOAK.

RUNIE, GET BACK!

GUYS, IT'S OKAY, REALLY...

...SHE'S MY FAMILY.

THIS IS MY *AUNT VELEDA.*

THE PLEASURE IS ALL MINE, I'M SURE.

THEN...HER FAMILY REALLY *WAS* HERE ON THE ISLAND?

WILD PLACE TO HOST THE REUNION.

ANYWAY--MAYBE AUNTY 'RUNE CAN PUT THESE *ROTTING CORPSES* BACK IN THEIR GRAVES?!

I CANNOT WIELD SUCH FORCES--BUT I DON'T NEED TO.

HELLRUNE POSSESSES *ALL THE POWER* REQUIRED FOR SUCH A SPELL. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, GIRL.

I'LL... I'LL TRY.

KRACKLE

KRACKLE

THAT'S IT, CHILD--YOU'RE CHANNELING YOUR *TRUE POWER.* NOW...

...UNLEASH IT!

SPECTACULAR

FSSSHH

AHH! RUNIE, YOU TOTALLY DID IT!

YEAH, I SURE DID--

MAKE HASTE--THE MAGIC DRAINED HER!

WE'VE GOT YOU!

'LEAST I...FIXED MY OWN... MISTAKE.

ABOUT TIME.

CADET!

BRING ME THE NEW CHAMPIONS!

WHO'S *THIS* NOW?

Deadpool Boy.
BOY DEADPOOL.

WHOA, FIRST APPEARANCE! SLAB IT!

THE SPELL I CAST SEARCHING FOR HELP--IT'S STILL ACTIVE.

RUNIE, WAIT UP. YOU'RE IN ***NO CONDITION*** TO DO ANYTHING ELSE RIGHT NOW.

BUT I'VE GOT...TO STOP IT.

DON'T BE OFFENDED, BUT YOU'VE EXCEEDED THE LIMITS OF YOUR MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE. I'VE BEEN THERE.

(ALTHOUGH NOT IN FRONT OF QUITE SO MANY PEOPLE...)

I CAN ***GROUND*** YOU--NEGATE THE SPELL.

IT'S OUR BEST COURSE OF ACTION UNTIL YOU KNOW HOW TO ***CONTROL*** YOUR SKILLS.

I GUESS...

HNHH.

FWASHOOOM

OH, I WAS KIND OF HOLDING OUT HOPE THAT WOULD ***REVERSE*** THE SPELL AND SEND US HOME, BUT I GUESS THAT SHIP HAS SAILED.

NOW WE ACTUALLY ***NEED*** A SHIP TO GET HOME...

SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO...I'M STILL LEARNING AND--

C'MON NOW, LIGHTNING STRIKE--DON'T BE EMBARRASSED.

NOTHING THAT HAPPENED HERE WAS A MISTAKE. CAN'T YOU ***FEEL*** IT?

FEEL WHAT, EXACTLY? ***WHO*** ARE YOU?

AND WHY ARE YOU ***WINKING*** AT ME LIKE THAT?

THE ***RESONANCE,*** SHINING STAR. THE ***POTENTIAL.***

LOOK AROUND YOU...

...HELLRUNE CAST A LINE FOR *NEW CHAMPIONS?*

I THINK SHE FOUND THEM. WE'RE THE *VANGUARD* OF THE NEXT GENERATION. THE FUTURE.

I MEAN, WE *HAVE* TALKED ABOUT EXPANDING THE TEAM...

HEY, AS LONG AS I KEEP SENIORITY.

I KNOW NONE OF YOU CAME HERE BY CHOICE. BUT THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO BE *CALLED TO ACTION*--TO PROTECT, TO INSPIRE AND TO *HONOR THE HEROES* WHO CAME BEFORE US.

MY FRIENDS AND I, WE GOT *DEALT A RAW HAND* IN LIFE. BUT WE WANT TO MAKE SURE *NO ONE ELSE* HAS TO GO THROUGH WHAT WE DID. THAT'S WHY WE *BECAME* THE NEW CHAMPIONS.

YOU ALL FIGHT THE *GOOD FIGHT* ALREADY. BUT WE COULD DO *SO MUCH MORE* TOGETHER THAN WE CAN APART. AND IF YOU'RE INTERESTED...THERE'S ROOM IN THE NEW CHAMPIONS FOR *ANY* YOUNG HERO WHO'S READY TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

SO-- WHAT DO YOU SAY?

OH... SORRY, NO.

NO.

UGH, I WISH.

NAH.

HAHA HAHAHA-- NO WAY!

FANTASTIC SPEECH, BUT I, SPECIFICALLY, AM NOT REALLY A "JOINER."

OH, UHM... OKAY?

WELL, THAT GOT A BIT AWKWARD...

WHO NEEDS A PORTAL HOME?

FWOOOM

I *WOULD* CONSIDER IT, BUT I'M ALREADY ON A TEAM...*

*CATCH *AVENGERS ACADEMY* ON MARVEL UNLIMITED! --ALANNA

I'M SORRY, BUT I'VE GOT A JOB AND ANOTHER PhD TO FINISH--PLUS YOU'RE ALL *WAY* YOUNGER THAN ME.

I DON'T EVEN THINK I'M CANON!

MAYBE I'LL THINK ABOUT IT... *MAYBE.*

PLEASE DON'T TELL SPIDEY HOW MANY ZOMBIES WE FOUGHT.

I'M PRETTY SURE *ONE* WOULD BE TOO MANY FOR HIM.

I HOPE THIS STREET MAGICIAN KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING WITH THIS PORTAL.

AND, LIBERTY... I CAN'T GIVE UP MY STUDIES RIGHT NOW, BUT MAYBE ONCE ***THE SCARLET WITCH*** HAS TAUGHT ME MORE ABOUT MY PAST*--

AHH, SAY NO MORE! TAKE THIS-- IT'S ONE OF OUR COMMUNICATORS. WE CAN, LIKE, TOTALLY STAY IN TOUCH!

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYING THIS, BUT THIS WAS ***ALMOST FUN.***

TOSS ME ONE OF THOSE-- IF I DON'T CRUSH IT BY ACCIDENT, I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL.

*CHECK OUT ***SCARLET WITCH (2024) #6-10!*** --ALANNA

IF SHE IS IN, I AM IN.

I MEAN--I WILL TAKE ONE TOO, PLEASE! ***ANY EXCUSE*** TO GET OUT OF WAKANDA. *BAH, SO STIFLING!*

YES, SURE, TAKE IT!

HOW KIND OF YOU TO OFFER.

BUT I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T A--

NOW, ARE YOU FOUR ALL SET TO HEAD HOME? I'M DYING TO WASH THE SMELL OF SWAMP OUT OF MY HAIR.

DID WE JUST DOUBLE THE SIZE OF THE TEAM?

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO WORK UP SO MANY REVISED MANEUVERS!

YOU ARE ***SUCH*** A NERD.

WHATEVER, MAN! THIS IS GOING TO BE ***BIG*** FOR US. A WHOLE NEW ERA FOR THE NEW--

UHH, GUYS...

I WANT TO ***THANK YOU*** FOR COMING ALL THIS WAY TO HELP ME.

I CAN'T REPAY THAT ENOUGH. BUT I CAME HERE TO FIND MY FAMILY.

MY ***REAL*** FAMILY. AND NOW I HAVE. SO I THINK...

...THIS IS WHERE MY TIME WITH THE TEAM ***ENDS.***

Soon after, on the outskirts of NYC.

FWOOOM

KAWGARDD

DARK

LORD

HEY, BABE--CARE TO *DISRUPT* THIS LITTLE STAR GADGET SO WE CAN CHITCHAT IN PEACE?

PLEASE. I DID IT THE SECOND YOU MATERIALIZED. I'M NOT A #$%€@ IDIOT, MONTE.

HAPPY ACCIDENTS ALL THE WAY UP AND DOWN THE CHAIN, BABY DOLL.

NOT ONLY DO THE *NEW CHUMPS* THINK I'M A POTENTIAL NEW RECRUIT-- THEY JUST *LOST* A FOUNDING MEMBER TO FAMILY DRAMA.

IT'S *NOT FAIR.* WHY'D THE CREEPY LITTLE GOTH'S SPELL TAKE YOU AND NOT ME? I MISSED OUT ON *ALL* THE FUN.

WELL, I AM TECHNICALLY A *"NEW CHAMPION"* OF ELDRITCH FORCES BEYOND COMPREHENSION, AND YOU *ARE* SUPER EVIL.

OH YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT...

...SO LET'S MESS $%@€ UP UNTIL THE WHOLE WORLD #$%€@ KNOWS IT.

Magnetrix.

UH-OH.

3

WHAT HAPPENED.

LISTEN, I, LIKE, TOTALLY GET IT-- YOU'RE SELF-CONSCIOUS BECAUSE YOU'RE THE *OUTDATED* MODEL.

NOT JUST OUTDATED, LIBERTY-- *IRRELEVANT.* BET THAT *BURNS.*

The New Champions.

YOU THINK *ANYTHING* YOU SAY MATTERS TO US? WE'VE PROVEN OUR WORTH A *DOZEN* TIMES OVER.

YOU'RE JUST *INEXPERIENCED, RECKLESS KIDS* WHO BARELY KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

01101000 01100101 =BZZT= 01101100 01110000 =SZZPARK=

The Champions.

IS THAT NOT WHAT WAS ONCE SAID ABOUT YOU?

YEAH, HOW'S IT FEEL TO GET *OLD,* LOSERS?

I DON'T KNOW. HOW'S IT FEEL...

...TO GET YOUR BUTT KICKED?

IT'S TIME TO CHANGE THE WORLD--AND TAKE YOU OUT OF IT!

YOU'LL BE THE *SECOND* HULK WE RIP APART.

I AM MEETING SO MANY NEW FACES LATELY!

PERHAPS MY *CLAWS* CAN REVEAL WHAT YOURS LOOKS LIKE BENEATH THAT MASK, *HMM?*

REALLY? YOU'LL BE THE *FIRST* MOON BRAT I *SMASH!*

STICK TO THE LITTER BOX, KITTY CAT.

I'M GONNA PUNCH YOU INTO THE SUN!

NOT IF I ROCKET YOU OUT OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM FIRST!

THIS IS *SICK.*

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE.

Liberty.
HARD-LIGHT CONSTRUCTS. HARD ON HERSELF.

I FEEL SICK.

RUNIE'S A *FOUNDING MEMBER* OF THE NEW CHAMPIONS. HER LEAVING IS LIKE...IT'S LIKE THE *AVENGERS* WITHOUT *THOR.*

THAT HAPPENS LEGIT *ALL* THE TIME.

I'M PRETTY SURE HE'S NOT ON THE TEAM *RIGHT NOW.*

Cadet Marvel.
JET-POWERED PUNCHES. MANNERS NOT CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF.

HELLRUNE NEVER ACTUALLY SAID SHE *WANTED* TO BE A HERO.

SHE WAS JUST TRYING TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HER FAMILY AND WHERE SHE CAME FROM.

Moon Squire.
TACTICAL GENIUS BY NIGHT. UNDERSTANDING FRIEND BY DAY.

LUCKY HER-- HER ONLY LIVING FAMILY IS A *FREAKY DEER WOMAN* LIVING ON *ZOMBIE ISLAND.*

OKAY, FIRST OFF-- THE ANTLERS MIGHT BE CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT, SO TRY TO BE RESPECTFUL, EMILIO.

AND, YES, *VELEDA* WAS... INTENSE.

BUT HELLRUNE *TRUSTED* HER. AND VELEDA'S THE ONLY LINK HELLRUNE HAS TO FINDING OUT WHERE SHE COMES FROM.

SO *WE* HAVE TO TRUST THAT HELLRUNE'S MADE THE RIGHT DECISION. AND IF ANYTHING *DOES* GO WRONG, WE HAVE TO BE THERE TO CATCH HER--

BZZP

GREAT TIMING. WE WERE GETTING *WAY* TOO EARNEST. WHAT'S IT SAY?

IT'S AN INVITATION... TO SOME SORT OF GALA?

IT'S PROBABLY FOR MY MOM AND GOT SENT TO ME BY MISTAKE.

SOUNDS BORING.

WAIT, LIB--KEEP READING.

WE WISH TO *FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGE* THE WORK THE NEW CHAMPIONS HAVE DONE TO *INSPIRE THE RISING GENERATION* OF POWERED YOUNG PEOPLE...

...PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO'VE GOTTEN A DIFFICULT START IN LIFE--

THE PARTY'S FOR US? NEVER MIND--THAT'S *AWESOME.*

The outskirts of NYC...

YOU, UHH...DON'T THINK THEY'LL DO ANY FACT-CHECKING?

Monte. STREET MAGICIAN. BAD-GIRL SMITTEN.

THEY SEEMED PRETTY GULLIBLE, BUT THEY'RE NOT *TOTAL--*

SEARCH ENGINES ARE @#$%#$ THESE DAYS. GOOD LUCK FINDING *ANYTHING* ONLINE.

NOW, THESE NEXT INVITEES--THEY MIGHT DO THEIR *DUE DILIGENCE,* WHICH IS WHY I'M GOING AFTER THE *BIGGEST EGO* ON THEIR ROSTER.

MY DARLING MAGIC MONTE...THERE'S *ONE LAST PIECE* OF THE PUZZLE TO GET THIS ACTIVATION *JUST* RIGHT.

I NEED YOU TO TELEPORT ME IN AND OUT OF *THE RAFT.*

TH-THE *SUPER-VILLAIN PRISON?* BUT THEY'VE GOT ALL SORTS OF SAFEGUARDS AND--

OH, MONTE...WHAT DID WE SAY ABOUT *QUESTIONING* ME?

NOW LET'S TRY THAT AGAIN.

YES, BABY.

I NEED YOU TO TELEPORT ME IN AND OUT OF THE RAFT.

YES, BABY.

GOOD MONTE.

The Raft.
Maximum-Security Super-Villain Prison.

Magnetrix.
MAXIMUM-CHAOS SUPER VILLAIN IN THE MAKING.

HALT!
YOU JUST BROKE INTO THE WRONG PRISON, LITTLE LADY!

WHAT'S YOUR DEAL, KID?
YOU SOME KINDA *MAGNETO* FANGIRL?

KINDA.

BZZMP

BZZMP

BUT MOSTLY, I JUST THINK THE HELMET LOOKS CUTE ON ME!

BZZMP

BZZMP

BZZMP

HNNHH--

GUUH!

AHH!

DISRUPTION ORBS REALLY $%#& WITH THE NERVOUS SYSTEM, HUH?

WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY'D DO TO ALIEN PHYSIOLOGY. I'D LOVE TO FIND OUT.

BUT IF YOU PLAY NICE AND FOLLOW MY RULES...

...YOU CAN BE THE ONLY ONE GOING PSYCHO TODAY.

Psycho-Man. EMOTION-MANIPULATING SCIENTIST.*

*CITATION NEEDED.

I'LL NEED MY EQUIPMENT.

FEAR

DOUBT

HATE

I'M NOT A @#$%& AMATEUR-- WE STOPPED BY THE ARMORY FIRST.

NOW LET'S GO MAKE SOME GOOD PEOPLE FEEL REAL BAD.

THIS IS AWKWARD, RIGHT?

Fantasma.
DEMONIC DERBY GIRL. DOUBTING THIS WHOLE DEAL.

WHAT? NO, IT'S NOT!

YOU'RE *ALL* NEW CHAMPIONS NOW.

I *BARELY* AGREED TO HANG OUT WITH YOU ALL AGAIN. I'VE NEVER SEEN *THAT* KID'S *FACE.*

IT'S *REALLY* WEIRD TO BE HONORED AS PART OF A TEAM I'M *BARELY* ON.

Gold Tiger.
GOLDEN TOUCH. SHINING PERSONALITY.

AND YET YOU STILL CAME-- CURIOUS!

WHATEVER. I DIDN'T HAVE OTHER PLANS.

Amaranth.
WAY MORE THAN A WITCH. (IT'S COMPLICATED.)*

WANDA THINKS I SHOULD MAKE MORE HUMAN FRIENDS.

WHY DID YOU HAVE TO SPECIFY "HUMAN"?

*FIND OUT WHY IN *SCARLET WITCH (2024) #10!* --ALANNA

THIS IS THE ADDRESS-- WE'RE HERE!

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE IS SO FASCINATING. YOU HAVE ***NO DEFINING AESTHETIC*** WHATSOEVER!

THERE'S NO WAY TO PHRASE THIS THAT DOESN'T SOUND ***SUPER OFFENSIVE,*** BUT WHY WEREN'T YOU IN ***WAKANDA*** WHEN WE PICKED YOU UP?

I DID NOT WANT TO MISS ANY ***NEW ADVENTURES,*** OF COURSE!

WAKANDA IS SO ***STIFLING.*** I TOLD THE MAGIC BOY TO SEND ME WHEREVER THE GIRL WITH THE PRETTY PIGTAILS WENT INSTEAD.

YOU FOLLOWED ME HOME TO LOS ANGELES...?

PERHAPS NOW I CAN LIVE IN ***THE CLUBHOUSE*** WHEN WE RETURN, YES?

OH... WE DON'T HAVE A--

AH, OUR GUESTS OF HONOR--JUST IN TIME!

I'M THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR. I'LL SHOW YOU TO THE STAGE.

OH, YOU MEAN WE GO RIGHT ON...?

YES, THE OTHER GUESTS ARE WAITING, AND ***THE LIVE STREAM*** IS ALL SET TO BEGIN.

OTHER GUESTS? I THOUGHT THIS WAS ALL ABOUT ***US.***

HELL IS LESS TORTUROUS THAN THIS.

OH, DON'T WORRY--YOU'RE ***DEFINITELY*** THE FOCUS OF THE EVENING.

RIGHT UP HERE.

IT IS SO DARK--

JUST TAKE ANY SEAT AND WE'LL GET STARTED.

WELCOME TO OUR ***VERY SPECIAL*** LIVE-STREAM EVENT, WHERE THE SO-CALLED ***NEW CHAMPIONS***--THE LATEST TEEN HEROES TO TAKE ***VIGILANTE JUSTICE*** INTO THEIR OWN HANDS--

EXCUSE ME?!

--AND ***THE CHAMPIONS,*** A FREQUENTLY ABSENT TEAM OF TEEN HEROES ***SO IRRESPONSIBLE*** THEY HELPED PROMPT ***LEGAL ACTION*** AGAINST UNDERAGE HEROES--

THAT IS ***NOT*** AN ACCURATE REPRESENTATION--

--DEBATE FOR ***YOU,*** THE VIEWER AT HOME.

I THOUGHT THIS WAS A ***CHARITY*** EVENT. WHERE ARE THE NEEDY PUPPIES?

AMADEUS, DUDE--DID YOU READ THE INVITE ***AT ALL?***

The Champions.

NOVA. BRAWN. MS. MARVEL. SPIDER-MAN. VIV VISION. YOU KNOW 'EM. YOU LOVE 'EM.

TONIGHT, WE'LL SETTLE, ONCE AND FOR ALL, WHICH TEAM HAS THE ***RIGHTFUL CLAIM*** TO THE TITLE OF ***CHAMPIONS.***

BUT WE'RE NOT TRYING TO TAKE IT!

YOU ***INSPIRED*** US! IT'S, LIKE, ***TOTALLY*** A RESPECTFUL HOMAGE!

I DON'T KNOW THESE PEOPLE.

SO, YOU REALLY JUST TURN THE KNOB AND THAT'S IT?

THAT IS A ***VAST*** OVERSIMPLIFICATION OF THE ***INCREDIBLY COMPLEX*** PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL POWERS OF THE CONTROL BOX.

WITH THIS DEVICE, I CAN STIMULATE FEAR, DOUBT AND ***HATE*** WITHIN THE FEEBLE HUMAN BRAIN.

...BUT YES, I JUST TURN THE KNOB.

KLIK

BUT SINCE YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN TOTALLY ***WASTING*** THE NAME...MAYBE WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING ***BETTER*** WITH IT AFTER ALL.

AND MAYBE I SHOULD SLAP THAT SMUG GRIN OFF YOUR STUPID LITTLE FACE, *HUH? **HUH?!***

WHY ARE ALL OF YOU DISPLAYING SUCH SUDDEN AGGRESSION?

ARE YOU UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF--?

UGH, ***SYNTHEZOIDS.***

BZZMP

YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.

MONTE, BABY-- BE A *CUTE LITTLE RIDESHARE* AND TAKE US HOME.

YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY AND SEE HOW THIS ENDS?

THAT'S WHAT THE LIVE STREAM'S FOR.

BESIDES, IF IT KEEPS ESCALATING, THEY'RE LIKELY TO BRING SOME *AVENGERS* DOWN ON THIS #$%€, AND THEN IT'LL *REALLY* GET SPICY UP IN--

SLAM

HNHH!

GET THE #$%@ OFF ME!

BEEMP BEEMP

BYE NOW.

ARRGGH!

HNNH!

I REMEMBER...

"...AT THE *HYDRA* FACILITY..."

"...A GIRL WITH THESE =HNHH= POWERS. BUT SHE--"

HEY, SHAKE IT OFF.

I DO ***NOT*** WANT TO FIGHT YOU. DO YOU WANT TO FIGHT ME?

NO! YOU'RE ***THE*** MS. MARVEL.

WHY DID I EVER WANT TO IN THE FIRST PLACE?!

I AM GETTING ***SERIOUS*** DEJA VU--THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME A CHAMPION GOT ***WAY*** EMOTIONAL AND FLIPPED OUT.*

*CHECK OUT *CHAMPIONS (2016) #12!* --ALANNA

WHATEVER JUST FRIED OUR BRAINS SNAPPED US OUT OF IT, I THINK.

I AM 99.9% SURE WE NEED TO FIND A GREEN-AND-WHITE MAN WITH A ***GOOFY BOX.*** YOU CAN'T SHRINK OR DO ANYTHING ELSE SNEAKY, CAN YOU?

I CAN GO ***INVISIBLE?*** I CAN MAKE US ***BOTH*** INVISIBLE!!!

LET'S BE FRIENDS AFTER THIS.

EXTREMELY BIG DEAL!

NEVER AGAIN WILL I BE ***HUMILIATED*** BY ADOLESCENTS!

WRONG!

PRO-TIP--DON'T OWN BEING CALLED "ADOLESCENTS."

OOPS.

AFTER IT HAPPENED.

YOUR OTHER SUIT'S MADE OF VIBRANIUM, *EH?* YOU DON'T SAY.

I MEAN, I DEFINITELY WOULD HAVE KICKED YOUR BUTT.

NUH-UH.

UH-HUH.

HAVING FRIENDS IS TAKING SOME GETTING USED TO.

YES, BUT IT IS WORTH IT.

I MEANT WHAT I SAID EARLIER--***BEFORE*** PSYCHO-MAN TURNED UP HIS DIAL. WE NEVER MEANT TO CAUSE ANY CONTROVERSY BY CALLING OURSELVES THE NEW CHAMPIONS.

IT KIND OF GOT ***GIVEN*** TO US AND STUCK, BUT WE'RE ALSO ***INSPIRED*** BY WHAT YOU ALL DID STRIKING OUT ON YOUR OWN AS YOUNG HEROES.

YO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO OVEREXPLAIN YOURSELVES.

IT WAS NEVER ABOUT GATEKEEPING THE NAME. WE ***WANTED*** OTHER KIDS TO STEP UP.

WE'RE *STILL* THE CHAMPIONS-- DON'T GET IT TWISTED.

BUT IT'S PRETTY COOL THAT YOU WANT TO BE THE *NEW CHAMPIONS* TOO.

THERE'S JUST ONE THING THAT STILL BOTHERS ME THOUGH.

PSYCHO-MAN HAD A PERSONAL GRUDGE AGAINST YOU GUYS, SO HE MAKES SENSE.

BUT HE'S *NOT* THE TYPE TO STAGE ALL THIS. SO WHO WAS *THAT GIRL*...

"...AND WHAT'S SHE GOING TO TRY NEXT?"

4

MELNIKOV 2024.

Los Angeles.

Gold Tiger.
ALCHEMICAL TOUCH! QUESTIONABLE JUDGMENT!

LUMO HARDWARE

♫

AH YES, THIS SHOULD DO.

PAWN

DISCOUNT DON'S PAWN SHOP

DING

CAN'T YOU READ? WE'RE ABOUT TO CLOSE UP FOR THE NIGHT.

THAT IS OKAY! THIS WILL NOT TAKE LONG.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXCHANGE THIS *GOLD BRICK* FOR AMERICAN CURRENCY, PLEASE!

CLUNK

NICE GLOVES, KID...

NOW, WHERE'D A LI'L GIRL LIKE YOU GET AHOLD OF A HUNK 'A VALUE LIKE THIS?

I *INHERITED* IT. NOW LET US COMPLETE OUR EXCHANGE, YES?

EH, EH, EH-- NOT SO FAST.

I'VE GOTTA CHECK ITS AUTHENTICITY, YEAH? DON'T WANNA GET *RIPPED OFF.*

LEMME PHONE A FRIEND OR TWO.

ON RECONSIDERATION, IN THE *SPIRIT* OF FRIENDSHIP, WHY DON'T YOU KEEP THIS BAR?

PERHAPS WE CAN BARTER AGAIN ANOTHER DAY!

YEAH, I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THAT...

...I'D SAY YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED.

THE SONS OF THE SERPENT ALWAYS GET THEIR PREY IN THE END.

NOT SO TOUGH NOW THAT YOU'RE NOT HIDING INSIDE WAKANDA'S WALLS, ARE YOU?

I WAS NEVER HIDING.

Berkeley, the home of...

MIRANDA, WE TOLD YOU BEFORE...

...NO HERO BUSINESS AT THE DINNER TABLE.

MAMÃE, IT'S AN EMERGENCY--

Liberty. HARD LIGHT! LEAVING HUNGRY!

--ONE OF MY TEAMMATES IS IN DANGER!

AI, YOU'RE EXCUSED!

BUT BE SAFE! AND STAY IN CONTACT!

NEW CHAMPIONS!

GOLD TIGER'S IN DISTRESS IN LOS ANGELES. WE NEED TO MOBILIZE--REPORT IN WITH YOUR LOCATIONS!

I'M AT EMILIO'S PLAYING VIDEO GAMES--

LOSING TO ME, YOU MEAN!

--SO WE CAN BE AT YOUR PLACE IN TWENTY.

Moon Squire. TACTICIAN IN DARKNESS. READS STRATEGY GUIDES.

Cadet Marvel. JET-POWERED PUNCH. BUTTON-MASHER.

Amaranth. SORCERESS IN TRAINING. LITERALLY OUT OF THIS WORLD.

"HMM, NO SIGNAL FOR AMARANTH. PROBABLY NOT IN THIS DIMENSION AGAIN."

FANTASMA, WHAT ABOUT YOU? OUR E.T.A. TO LOS ANGELES IS ***AT LEAST*** HALF AN HOUR.

YOU'RE GOLD TIGER'S BEST BET FOR AN IMMEDIATE ASSIST!

Fantasma.
HELLFIRE DERBY GIRL. CURSING HER CURSE.
FANTASMA?
DIOS MIO-- DO YOU WANT MY ***WHOLE TEAM*** TO KNOW ABOUT MY "HOT WHEELS"?
I THOUGHT ***WE*** WERE YOUR TEAM.
GOLD TIGER IS IN TROUBLE. MY GEOTAGGING SAYS YOU'RE FIVE MINUTES AWAY.
I'M KIND OF IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING HERE...
THAT'S FINE--IF YOU'RE ***TOO BUSY*** TO SHOW UP FOR US, I'VE GOT TO GO. GOLD TIGER COULD BE IN ***SERIOUS DANGER,*** AND WE--
WAIT! WAIT, YOU GOT ME, OKAY?
I'LL GO BE A GOOD LITTLE ***NEW CHAMPION,*** COMPRENDE?
SEND ME KITTY CAT'S LOCATION.

WITH A "GIFT" LIKE YOURS, HOW LONG DID YOU ***REALLY*** THINK YOU COULD WALK AROUND FREELY, GIRL?

GAH!

SCRRRCH

I DO NOT THINK I LIKE YOUR ***INTONATION*** WHEN YOU CALL ME "GIRL."

HNRHH... THE BOSS WILL JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT US BRINGING YOU IN DE--

THWACK

FORGET INTONATION--I DON'T THINK I LIKE ***ANYTHING*** ABOUT THESE GOONS.

PRETTY GHOST GIRL! YOU CAME TO HELP ME?

HEY, I'M STILL FLESH AND BLOOD.

MORE OR LESS.

AND EVEN IF YOU'RE A LITTLE ANNOYING, I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU END UP AS ROADKILL.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE AND LET THEM FLIRT-- FIRE!

FIRE? WELL, SINCE YOU ASKED SO NICELY.

WHOOOSH

SCREW THIS.

UGH, I THOUGHT CAPTAIN AMERICA HANDLED YOU LOSERS AT THE BORDER.*

*IN *CAPTAIN AMERICA: SAM WILSON (2015).* --ALANNA

THAT WAS A DIFFERENT CELL!

BUT *NO* SONS OF THE SERPENT ARE GETTING TAKEN OUT BY A ***BUNCH OF BRATS!***

CAREFUL, HE'S GOT A--

--SMOKE BOMB!

FFFFSSSSHHH

=WHEEZE=

=COUGH COUGH=

OKAY, I WAS *JUST* STARTING TO RESPECT YOU GUYS, BUT YOU LET A *SINGLE* SKINHEAD GET THE DROP ON YOU AFTER GT AND I TOOK OUT A WHOLE GANG?

AS IF. WE WERE JUST =HACK= LETTING HIM THINK HE GOT AWAY...

...SO HE WOULDN'T NOTICE ME *TAGGING HIM* WITH A HARD-LIGHT GEO-TRACKER.

NOW WE CAN CLEAR OUT THE WHOLE SNAKE NEST!

THAT'S =COUGH COUGH= GREAT AND ALL, BUT WHAT I *REALLY* WANT TO KNOW IS *WHY* THE SONS OF THE SERPENT WERE AFTER LI'L MISS GOLDFINGERS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

BAH, THEY PROBABLY MISTOOK ME FOR SOMEONE ELSE. THERE ARE *SO* MANY WEST COAST HEROES THESE DAYS.

AND IF GOLD TIGER'S NOT COMFORTABLE SHARING SOMETHING RIGHT NOW, THAT'S HER PREROGATIVE, CADET.

NOPE, SORRY--THE RUDE ROCKET BOY'S RIGHT FOR ONCE.

IF WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS TEAM THING, WE NEED TO FACE THE FACTS...

...WE BARELY *KNOW* EACH OTHER.

AND TONIGHT PROVES THAT IF WE DON'T *FIX THAT*, IT'LL KEEP COMING BACK TO *HAUNT US.*

The next day...

THANKS, MOM. WE'RE GOOD HERE.

JUST TEXT IF YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE!

AND NICE TO MEET THE REST OF YOU!

SO, YOUR PARENTS JUST...KNOW YOU'RE A ***SUPER HERO*** OR WHATEVER? AND ARE FINE WITH US USING YOUR GARAGE FOR, UGH, ***ICEBREAKERS?***

TEAM-BUILDING WAS BASICALLY YOUR IDEA, ***ISABELLA.***

IZZY ALVAREZ-- DON'T MAKE ME REGRET SHARING MY REAL NAME.

BUT, YES, BECAUSE OF EVERYTHING WITH ***HYDRA*** AND HOW WE GOT REUNITED WITH OUR FOLKS, WE DIDN'T REALLY ***HAVE THE OPTION*** OF SECRET IDENTITIES.

THIS IS ***EXACTLY*** WHY WE NEEDED TO DO THIS--THERE IS ***SO MUCH*** ABOUT EACH OTHER WE DON'T KNOW!

AND IT'S NOT LIKE WE CAN FORGE DEEP INTERPERSONAL CONNECTIONS WHILE FIGHTING FROST ZOMBIES OR PSYCHO-MAN.

NOW WE CAN JUST... TALK.

SO--WHO WANTS TO START?

I WILL? IT'S ONLY FAIR SINCE I WASN'T ON THIS PLANE OF EXISTENCE WHEN GOLD TIGER NEEDED HELP YESTERDAY.

SURE THING, AMY. GO AHEAD.

WELL, I THOUGHT I WAS A ***SOMEWHAT*** NORMAL WITCH, AND THAT THE ONLY THING I HAD TO RECKON WITH WAS ACCIDENTALLY DRIVING MY ADOPTIVE FATHER ***INSANE.***

BUT I RECENTLY DISCOVERED THAT I'M ACTUALLY THE CHILD OF THE ***GODS OF WITCHCRAFT AND CHAOS,*** CONCEIVED AS A SORT OF LIVING TRUCE BETWEEN THEIR ELDRITCH POWERS.

AND THEN I TOLD ***WANDA MAXIMOFF,*** POTENTIALLY ONE OF THE GREATEST MAGIC USERS THIS DIMENSION HAS EVER KNOWN, THAT SHE WASN'T THE TEACHER I ***NEEDED*** AND THAT I HAD TO FIGURE THINGS OUT ON MY OWN TOO...WHICH MIGHT'VE BEEN A HUGE MISTAKE?

OH, WOW.

I...NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED ALL THAT!

WELL, YOU ARE HOLDING UP ***REMARKABLY WELL*** CONSIDERING THE... CIRCUMSTANCES!

WHO WANTS TO SHARE NEXT?

MY TRUE NAME IS ***ABENA ADEBAYO.***

I HAD ALWAYS HOPED ANY ***FRIENDS*** I MADE WOULD CALL ME ***BEBE.***

AND...I HAVE NOT SHARED MUCH WITH YOU ALL BECAUSE I LEFT WAKANDA WITHOUT ***PERMISSION.***

"PERMISSION"?

FROM THE WAKANDAN GOVERNMENT?

FROM ***MY MOTHER.***

I MAY BE THE GOLD TIGER, BUT TO HER, I WILL ALWAYS BE A CUB.

"IT IS NO SECRET NOW THAT ***VIBRANIUM*** IS WAKANDA'S GREAT TREASURE.

"METAL FROM THE HEAVENS, WITH REMARKABLE PROPERTIES! ALMOST ALL OF IT LANDED IN WHAT IS NOW WAKANDA. ***ALMOST.***

"AND THAT 'ALMOST' IS WHY, YEARS AGO, ***THE KING*** ASKED TWO OF HIS MOST LOYAL RESEARCHERS TO LEAVE THEIR BELOVED HOME TO ***TRAVEL THE WORLD*** IN SEARCH OF ***OTHER FORMS*** OF VIBRANIUM...

"...WHICH THEY FINALLY DISCOVERED, DEEP IN THE CAMBODIAN JUNGLE.

"WHAT THE RESEARCHERS DID NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, WAS THAT THEY WERE ***NOT THE ONLY ONES*** WHO HAD HEARD OF A FABLED GOLDEN TEMPLE.

"AS THEY STUDIED THE GOLDEN METAL--SO MUCH LIKE WAKANDA'S VIBRANIUM, YET UNIQUE IN ITS OWN WAY--MEN IN ***GREEN OUTFITS*** AMBUSHED THEM.

"WITH NO OTHER ESCAPE, THE RESEARCHERS FLED INTO THE TEMPLE...

BLAM

"...BUT *ONLY ONE* MANAGED TO ESCAPE THEIR PURSUERS.

"AND WITHOUT HER EQUIPMENT, SHE COULD NOT LIGHT HER PATH.

"WHICH MEANS SHE DID NOT SEE THE STONE BENEATH HER FEET CRUMBLING...

"...OR KNOW THAT SHE WOULD LAND IN FRONT OF THE *VERY SECRET* THEY HAD SOUGHT ALL ALONG.

AHHHHH!

"HIDDEN DEEP UNDERGROUND WAS A METEORITE OF *PURE GOLDEN VIBRANIUM*-- SEEMINGLY THE SOURCE OF THE METAL THAT COATED THE WALLS OF THE TEMPLE.

"BUT WHEN SHE BEHELD THE METEORITE, A GREAT *RUMBLING* BEGAN, AND A FLASH OF BRILLIANT LIGHT RENDERED THE RESEARCHER UNCONSCIOUS!

"WHEN SHE AWOKE, THE TEMPLE HAD ***COLLAPSED*** AROUND HER. IT TOOK HER HOURS TO CRAWL TO THE SURFACE.

"MOST BAFFLING OF ALL, THE ***GOLDEN WALLS*** OF THE TEMPLE WERE NOW NOTHING MORE THAN SIMPLE STONE.

"BUT THE RESEARCHER DID NOT HAVE LONG TO PONDER THIS.

ROAAAR!

"THE TEMPLE COLLAPSE HAD TAKEN HER ***HUMAN*** ATTACKERS WITH IT, BUT THE COMMOTION HAD DRAWN THE ATTENTION OF THE JUNGLE'S ***TRUE MASTER.***

"AFTER ALL SHE HAD SURVIVED, THE RESEARCHER WAS ***NOT*** GOING TO BACK DOWN NOW.

"THANKFULLY, IT SEEMED THAT THE TIGER HAD NOT COME WITH ***HUNGER*** ON ITS MIND, BUT THE ***PROTECTION*** OF ITS OWN.

"SO TOO, IT TURNS OUT, HAD THE RESEARCHER.

"THE WAKANDAN GOVERNMENT SENT A RETRIEVAL TEAM FOR THE RESEARCHER, BUT ALL OF HER DATA WAS LOST.

"AND, MUCH TO HER CONFUSION, ***NO TRACE*** REMAINED OF THE GOLD VIBRANIUM ANYWHERE WITHIN THE SITE.

"BEFORE LONG, SHE HAD MORE PRESSING CONCERNS THAN ARCHAEOLOGY.

AHHHHHHH!

"YOU SEE, THE RESEARCHERS HAD ***FALLEN IN LOVE.*** AND AFTER RETURNING TO BIRNIN ZANA, THE SURVIVOR OF THAT UNION ***GAVE BIRTH...***

WHAT IS WRONG? LET ME SEE MY BABY!

"...WHICH IS WHEN SHE DISCOVERED ***WHY*** NO TRACE OF THE GOLD VIBRANIUM HAD BEEN FOUND AT THE TEMPLE.

WAAAAAH!

"SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY... THE RESEARCHER HAD TAKEN IT WITH HER.

"AND PASSED IT ALONG TO ***ME.***

"AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THIS MADE ME A SUBJECT OF ***GREAT INTEREST*** TO WAKANDA'S SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY-- THOUGH MY MOTHER TOOK ***MUCH CONVINCING*** TO LET ANYONE STUDY ME.

"THERE ARE INSTANCES OF HUMANS BONDING WITH VIBRANIUM, BUT I WAS A CHILD BONDED WITH A FORM OF VIBRANIUM ***NO ONE*** HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE!

"AND NOT ONLY THAT... BUT IT SEEMED THAT ANYTHING I TOUCHED ***CREATED MORE OF IT.***

"WHICH IS NOT EXACTLY A SAFE PROPOSITION FOR A GRABBY TODDLER!

"MY MOTHER DID NOT TOLERATE THE SCIENTISTS FOR LONG. SHE TOOK IT UPON HERSELF TO TEACH ME HOW TO CONTROL MY ***GOLD TOUCH.***

"TO TOUCH OBJECTS WITHOUT TURNING THEM TO GOLD, AND TO DIRECT WHERE THE SHINING METAL CONCENTRATES ON MY BODY--ALTHOUGH IT STUBBORNLY ***REFUSES*** TO LEAVE MY HANDS.

"FOR 'MY OWN SAFETY,' MY MOTHER AND I RARELY LEFT OUR FAMILY HOME. SHE REGALED ME WITH STORIES OF THE YEARS SHE AND MY FATHER ***TRAVELED THE WORLD...***

"...BUT STORIES ARE A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR ACTUALLY LIVING.

"AS I GREW OLDER--AND BEGAN TO COMPLAIN MORE OFTEN--MY MOTHER ALLOWED ME TO LEARN HOW TO ***DEFEND MYSELF,*** SHOULD THE NEED EVER ARISE.

"BUT EVEN WITH THE BEST TRAINING WAKANDA CAN OFFER, THE PROSPECT OF LEAVING OUR APARTMENT BUILDING, ***LET ALONE THE CITY,*** WAS FORBIDDEN.

"SO IT WAS THAT I BECAME MY MOTHER'S ***GOLDEN CHILD***--AND WAS LOCKED AWAY IN A TOWER FOR IT."

THAT IS WHY I WAS ***SO THRILLED*** WHEN YOUR FRIEND'S ***MAGIC BIRDS*** FLEW ME AWAY...

BUT MY MOTHER IS NOT WRONG-- THERE IS NO OTHER ***GOLD VIBRANIUM*** ON EARTH. I AM ***TOO PRECIOUS*** TO LEAVE HER WATCHFUL EYE.

BUT CAN'T YOU JUST, LIKE, ***MAKE AS MUCH OF IT*** AS YOU WANT?

AH, WHATEVER I TURN TO GOLD ***REVERTS*** AFTER A DAY OR SO.

THAT'S HOW I'VE BEEN MAKING MONEY TO STAY IN LOS ANGELES--I SELL ***TEMPORARY*** GOLD BRICKS TO THE PAWN SHOPS WITH THE ***WORST REVIEWS*** FOR RIPPING OFF THEIR CUSTOMERS.

ALL RIGHT, I LIKE HER.

BUT IF THE ***SONS OF THE SERPENT*** KNOW I AM HERE, IT IS ***NOT SAFE*** FOR ME TO BE AROUND YOU. I WILL JUST BRING DANGER TO YOUR DOORSTEP.

PERHAPS I MUST ***GO BACK*** TO WAKANDA AND MY MOTHER AFTER ALL.

NO! THE ***WHOLE POINT*** OF THE NEW CHAMPIONS WAS THAT WE SHOULD GET TO ***CHOOSE*** OUR PATHS.

ALL THAT STUFF WITH YOUR MOM? THAT'S REALLY COMPLICATED AND SO NOT IN MY LANE TO SORT OUT. BUT WE WILL ***NOT*** STAND BY AND LET SOME ***SKINHEAD SNAKE LOSERS*** DICTATE THAT CHOICE FOR YOU!

Nearby, in a decrepit lair...

YES, IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT THIS CHAPTER OF THE ***SONS OF THE SERPENT*** HAS SEEN BRIGHTER DAYS, MY BROTHERS IN SCALES.

BUT WITH THE ***MIDAS TOUCH*** OF THE WAKANDAN FUGITIVE, WE WILL RETURN OURSELVES TO ***GLORY*** AMONG OUR RETICULATED COHORT!

WE WILL--

UHH, BOSS... THERE'S SOMETHING--

SERIOUSLY, JERRY?

DON'T INTERUPT ME WHEN I'M GIVING A ROUSING SPEECH. I'LL LOSE MY TRAIN OF--

CRACK-CRK

WHAT THE--?

GREEAK

LET US SEE-- THE *MOST PATHETIC* GROUP OF BIGOTS I HAVE EVER ENCOUNTERED AGAINST *MY* NEW FRIENDS?

AHH!

FWUMP

I ALMOST FEEL BAD FOR YOU.

ALMOST.

5
MELNIKOV
2025

The Scandinavian wilds.

AHHH!

THIS IS SO FRUSTRATING. THE ARTIFACTS JUST FEEL LIKE *STUFF.*

THERE'S NO, LIKE, DEEPER POWER.

Hellrune. TAPPING INTO RUNES. FEELING TAPPED OUT.

I'M REALLY SORRY, AUNT VELEDA. I FEEL SO *STUPID.*

I SWEAR I'M TRYING, BUT THE MAGIC IS ALL MIXED UP IN MY HEAD. I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH YET TO--

DON'T APOLOGIZE, DEAR CHILD. YOU ARE... *DOING YOUR BEST.*

IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT SO MUCH OF OUR FAMILY'S HERITAGE WAS ***STOLEN*** FROM YOU.

BUT NOW YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEIZE IT BACK.

WE WERE ONCE AMONG THE WISEST, ***MOST GIFTED*** WITCHES TO EVER COMMUNE WITH THE GODS.

A POWER--AND A HISTORY--THAT WAS CRUELLY WIPED FROM MEMORY.

I THOUGHT I WAS THE ***LAST*** OF OUR PROUD LINEAGE.

A DIM FLICKER OF WHAT WE ONCE WERE.

UNTIL I FOUND YOU, MY DEAR NIECE.

YOU HOLD THE UNTOLD POTENTIAL TO BRING OUR ***LINEAGE*** BACK TO POWER.

NOW GATHER THE ARTIFACTS.

I THOUGHT THIS ***SITE OF RESONANCE*** MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO CONCENTRATE YOUR POWERS, BUT I SEE WE HAVE TRAINING YET TO DO--AND JOURNEYS YET TO UNDERTAKE.

AUNT VELEDA? IF WE'RE LEAVING, DO YOU THINK I COULD... COULD SEND A RAVEN BACK TO MY FRIENDS?

JUST SO THEY DON'T ***WORRY***--

HELLRUNE...IF WE ARE TO REGAIN OUR FAMILY'S ***ANCESTRAL STRENGTH*** AND DISCOVER WHAT BECAME OF MY SISTER--***YOUR MOTHER***--YOU CANNOT FIND YOURSELF MIRED IN THE PEAT BOG OF THE PAST.

BESIDES, YOUR "FRIENDS" HAVE NOT SENT WORD ***TO YOU,*** HAVE THEY?

NOT SINCE THEY MADE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THAT ***SORCERESS*** APPRENTICED TO THE SCARLET WITCH.

I DON'T WISH TO WOUND YOU, BUT WHEN YOU POSSESS ***TRUE POWER,*** YOU MUST CONSIDER WHETHER YOUR ALLIES VALUE ***YOU***...OR ***YOUR MAGIC.***

San Francisco.
Moon Squire's basement.

Amaranth.
THAT SORCERESS APPRENTICED TO THE SCARLET WITCH.

I THINK WE ARE *SERIOUSLY LACKING* WHEN IT COMES TO MAGIC.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, BRUJA! I'VE BEEN RUNNING CIRCLES AROUND DEMONS AND DEVILS SINCE BEFORE I MET ANY OF YOU, AND THE *LAST THING* I NEED IS--

Fantasma.
FLAMING SKATES, HOT ATTITUDE.

CALMING HUG ATTACK!

Gold Tiger.
GOLDEN TOUCH--AND A GENTLE ONE.

HEY, WHAT'RE YOU--GET OFF ME!

Moon Squire.
TEAM TACTICIAN (AND WORRIER).

NO *HELL PORTALS* IN MY BASEMENT, IZZY!

I GOT LITTLE SISTERS UPSTAIRS!

THE HELL PORTALS ONLY OPEN INVOLUNTARILY WHEN I HAVE FULL-BLOWN PANIC ATTACKS...*NOT JUST WHEN YOU GUYS ANNOY ME.*

AND THAT *ISN'T* YOUR FAULT. THE CURSED ENERGY AROUND YOU IS POTENT--I SENSED IT THE FIRST TIME WE MET.

BUT, AS WE *ALL* SAW AT THE BOARDWALK THE OTHER DAY, WHEN THINGS *DID* GET OUT OF CONTROL...

"...CLOSING THOSE PORTALS CAN REQUIRE A *TEAM* EFFORT."

FZZMMPPHH

I SAID I HAD THIS-- *HRRN*-- HANDLED!

DOES THIS LOOK HANDLED TO YOU?!

WHICH WE WILL *ALWAYS* BE UP FOR. AND MAYBE THE ANSWER'S *NOT* MAGICAL!

MAYBE... WE CAN HELP IZZY LEARN BETTER MECHANISMS FOR *MANAGING* HER ANXIETY. IN THERAPY, I--

Liberty. BEACON OF POSITIVITY (AND HARD-LIGHT TECH).

DIOS MIO, CAN WE *PLEASE* STOP TALKING ABOUT MY *FEELINGS?*

I AGREE THAT MENTAL HEALTH AND MAGIC GO HAND IN HAND, BUT ISABELLA'S ACCIDENTAL HELL PORTALS ARE *FAR* FROM THE ONLY MYSTICAL THREAT WE'LL FACE AS A TEAM.

THEY'RE NOT EVEN THE ONLY METAPHYSICAL DANGER THAT ALMOST OVERWHELMED US *THIS WEEK.*

HAHAHAH WAIT, SHE *TOTALLY* MEANS YOU, JAREN!

Cadet Marvel. JET-POWERED JESTER.

DO WE *HAVE* TO TALK ABOUT THIS?

ABOUT HOW I *TOTALLY* SAVED YOUR LIFE?

UHH, YEAH...

YOU *TOTALLY* DESTROYED THE ENTIRE ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX, EMILIO.

"...TO RESCUE OUR LI'L MOON SQUIRE'S ***ETERNAL SOUL*** FROM THE EGYPTIAN GOD WHO KEEPS TRYING TO ***MUMMIFY HIM*** THROUGH THE INTERNET!"

LITTLE HELP... PLEASE.

HANDS OFF THE NERD!

AT LAST, THIS EARTHLY VESSEL WILL BE MINE!

I APPRECIATE THE SAVE, EMILIO...BUT YOU COULD HAVE JUST *UNPLUGGED* THE CABINETS TOO.

WHATEVER. THEY'VE GOT INSURANCE.

YOU CAN'T *PUNCH* YOUR WAY OUT OF MOST MAGICAL PREDICAMENTS. THE SYSTEMS ARE MORE DELICATE THAN THAT.

SO FAR, WE'VE MANAGED PRETTY WELL AGAINST ZOMBIES AND SNAKE CULTISTS AND OTHER, MORE EARTHBOUND PERILS.

BUT IF WANDA TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT'S THAT *PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.*

AND WE STILL NEED *A LOT* OF PRACTICE WHEN IT COMES TO THE WORLD OF MAGIC.

WE RELIED SO MUCH ON *HELLRUNE* TO COVER THAT STUFF FOR US...AND *EVEN SHE* BARELY UNDERSTOOD HOW SHE DID WHAT SHE DID.

I'M SURE YOUR FRIEND WAS VERY CAPABLE.

BUT NOW IT'S UP TO US TO BECOME...SOMETHING OF AN *OFFBEAT COVEN* OF OUR OWN.

AWW, COME ON-- NOT ON THE WALLS!

WANDA HAS A *DOOR* THAT OPENS FOR THOSE WHO ARE *MOST* IN NEED OF HER AID.

I EXPLAINED TO HER ABOUT OUR SITUATION, SO SHE TAUGHT ME A ONE-TIME ENCHANTMENT TO OPEN...

...A WINDOW.

IT'S NOT A *PORTAL*, BUT IT CAN *SHOW* US ACTIVE MAGICAL THREATS ON *OUR* LEVEL.

THAT'S A LITTLE PATRONIZING.

BUT WE CAN WORK OUR WAY UP!

AHH, I SEE SOMETHING!

WAIT, ISN'T THAT--?

THE UNIVERSE IS CHOOSING *CHAOS* TODAY.

PTOOO

IT'S HIM.

Monte.
STREETWISE MAGICIAN. ALL OUT OF TRICKS RIGHT NOW.

MAYBE I CAN GET IT TO REBOOT.

AMY! I KNOW MONTE DIDN'T MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION ON YOU, BUT HE IS IN THE EXTENDED NEW CHAMPIONS ORBIT.

AND EVEN IF HE WASN'T, WE CAN'T ***NOT*** HELP HIM. BASIC HERO STUFF!

THERE'S ANOTHER BATHROOM UPSTAIRS FOR ANYONE WHO NEEDS TO CHANGE INTO THEIR COSTUME!

HOW'RE WE GETTING TO AMARANTH'S BESTIE BEFORE HE BECOMES FROG FOOD?

IF SHE CAN HELP POINT THE WAY, I MIGHT KNOW A SHORTCUT.

San Juan, Puerto Rico.

WHUD-THWUMP

BZZMP

OKAY, **NO WAY** CAN **HELL PORTAL** BECOME OUR NEW OFFICIAL MODE OF TRANSPORT--

GAH!

LOOK ALIVE, NEW CHAMPIONS.

NOT ALL OF US HAVE HEADS AS THICK AS CADET MARVEL'S!

I HEARD THAT!

HEY, YOU GUYS GOT FAMILY ON THE ISLAND TOO?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I COULD USE A HAND!

THIS IS **ALL YOU,** AMY-- WE'RE READY TO FOLLOW YOUR LEAD!

NO PRESSURE.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT LEADING, BUT I CAN **GUIDE** US. AFTER ALL...

"...MAGIC IS ABOUT FINDING **TRUTH** IN THE DARKNESS.

SHK

SHK

SHK

"MUCH OF THE MYSTIC WORLD IS DESIGNED TO **CATCH YOU** OFF GUARD.

SWOOMP-SWOOMP

"WE GET CARRIED AWAY WITH NOTIONS OF POWER AND CONTROL...

SPLASH

"...BUT THAT'S SO OFTEN AN ILLUSION--A *GLAMOUR.*

HUZZUUUUUM

KRACKLE

"AND WHEN THE TRUTH IS *REFLECTED* BACK ON THE CASTER..."

...THEIR TRUE POWER--OR *LACK THEREOF*--IS REVEALED.

FWASHOOM

WOW, YOU MEAN THAT BIG BAD THING WAS JUST A LI'L HIPPITY-HOPPITY GUY?

NOW I JUST FEEL *EMBARRASSED.*

NO WONDER I FLUNKED OUT OF *STRANGE ACADEMY...*

IT'S ACTUALLY *REALLY* ENDEARING TO SEE THIS VULNERABLE SIDE, MONTE!

BUT *TOTALLY* DON'T FEEL BAD-- WE ALL NEED HELP SOMETIMES.

PERHAPS YOU MIGHT JOIN OUR MAGICAL LESSONS AS WELL!

SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU, HOCUS POCUS?

THE MAGIC I ABSORBED FROM THE FROG WIZARD... IT WAS SO *MEAGER.*

IT DOESN'T ACCOUNT FOR THE POWER HE POSSESSED WHILE FIGHTING MONTE...

"...LET ALONE THE BLAST THAT HIT CADET MARVEL."

PONK PONK PONK

EWW.

KRAKOBOOM

WHAT WAS THAT?!

THAT...WAS WHY THE MAGIC WASN'T ADDING UP.

KNOW ME... AND KNOW FEAR...

OKAY, WELL, I KNOW WHEN TO GIVE IT UP AND CALL THE AVENGERS.

WE'VE GOT THIS--JUST FOLLOW AMY'S LESSONS!

AHH!

NNNH!

HAIL HYDRA!

DO NOT WORRY, ABENA.

YOU WILL BE SAFE IN HERE, FOREVER AND EVER AND EVER AND EVER AND--

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM?!

I...I DON'T KNOW.

I CAN'T GROUND THE MAGIC--*IT'S LATCHED ON TO THEM!*

RAARGH!

RRGK!

EEEH!

YOU DRAGGED US ***ALL*** TO HELL, SIS--YOUR ***WHOLE FAMILY!*** YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A ***CURSE*** ON EVERYONE YOU MEET!

NO!

HELLRUNE

SHUT UP AND LIFT

You are chaos incarnate, child... All who know you will suffer by your hand!

MY... WORST... FEAR?

YEAH, SORRY--TOO LATE...

SPLORCH

...ALREADY LIVED IT.

WHAT'S YOURS?!

TOLD YOU PUNCHING WORKS.

I'M WILLING TO ACCEPT A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH.

WHAT DID THE BEAST SHOW YOU THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO CONQUER YOUR FEAR SO QUICKLY?!

IT WAS A ***DEBILITATING*** EXPERIENCE FOR THE REST OF US.

YEAH, UHH, JUST SOME STUPID DUMB STUFF. IT'S NOT IMPORTANT.

WAIT, GUYS-- MONTE'S GONE...

...AND SO IS LIBERTY.

NEXT:

Avenging.

Revenging.

And all Hel breaks loose!

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Times Square.

QUICKLY! YOU MUST FLEE!

GOLD TIGER, HUH? MAYBE YOU CAN GIVE MY SUIT A RECOLOR AFTER WE--

YOWCH! EVEN **SIMULATED HELLFIRE** HURTS LIKE THE DEVIL.

SCCCRRCHHH!

STEADY, ***AMARANTH.*** PROTECT THE CIVILIANS AT ALL COSTS.

I'M-- HNHH--DOING MY BEST, ***STORM.*** BUT...

"...WHO'S GOING TO SAVE ***LIBERTY?***"

KRACKLE

THAT'S RIGHT. KEEP THAT ENERGY FLOWING.

IT'S TIME TO *DISRUPT* THIS WHOLE #$%€#@$ CITY.

California Coast Veterans Cemetery.
Earlier Today.

WELL, THIS SUCKS.

I MEAN, THIS ALWAYS SUCKS. OR HURTS, OR WHATEVER. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

BUT USUALLY, I HAVE SOMETHING ***COOL*** TO TELL YOU ABOUT. LIKE ME AND DAD FIXING UP YOUR OLD MUSTANG TOGETHER, OR ALL THAT STUFF WITH SPIDER-WOMAN.

BUT WE KINDA ***MESSED UP*** THIS TIME, MOM.

AND NOW ONE OF MY FRIENDS IS IN TROUBLE, AND WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

SGT. EVA GALLARDO
ALPHA FLIGHT

BELOVED WIFE,
CHERISHED MOTHER.

ALWAYS AMONG THE STARS

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YOU DO EXACTLY WHAT YOUR MOTHER WOULD HAVE DONE, ***CADET--***

--CALL FOR REINFORCEMENTS.

COLONEL DANVERS--I MEAN, ***CAPTAIN MARVEL.*** YOU ACTUALLY CAME.

I DIDN'T KNOW IF MY EMAIL WOULD GO THROUGH TO, Y'KNOW--SPACE.

WE HAVE PRETTY GOOD WI-FI UP THERE.

AND I PROMISED YOUR FAMILY WHEN YOUR MOM DIED, I'D BE HERE IF YOU NEEDED ME. MY RESPONSIBILITY TO MY ***ALPHA FLIGHT CREW*** ISN'T OVER JUST BECAUSE I'M NO LONGER CALLING THE SHOTS.

YOU COULD HAVE SENT AN EMAIL BEFORE DECIDING TO ***LIFT MY NAME AND COSTUME*** TOO--OUR MUTUAL SPIDER-FRIEND TOOK ***WAY*** TOO MUCH PLEASURE SURPRISING ME WITH THAT NEWS.

LISTEN, I SAID I WAS SORRY!!!

BUT... CLEARLY, YOU'RE LIVING UP TO THE MANTLE, SO I'LL TAKE THE COMPLIMENT.

YEAH, WELL-- I DID IT 'CUS MY MOM LOOKED UP TO YOU. SO... THANKS.

BUT NOW IT FEELS LIKE I'M MESSING EVERYTHING UP. LIBERTY--

THE STAR GIRL.

YEAH, OUR EVER-PERKY LEADER... SHE GOT ***TAKEN.***

HYDRA?

WHOA, NO, NO-- AT LEAST, WE DON'T THINK SO.

THIS CRUST-PUNK MAGIC KID WE ***THOUGHT*** WAS ONE OF US VANISHED WITH LIB AFTER WE SAVED HIS $@# FROM SOME FREAKY FROG DEMON.

WATCH THAT MOUTH, CADET.

UGH, SORRY. ANYWAY, LIB'S COMMUNICATOR ISN'T RESPONDING, AND AMARANTH, OUR WITCH GIRL--

WANDA'S APPRENTICE.

YEAH, HER. SHE CAN'T SORCERIZE HER LOCATION OR WHATEVER EITHER. ***MONTE'S*** GOT A BUNCH OF MAGIC MESSING IT ALL UP.

THEN IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU MADE THE RIGHT CALL.

LET'S SHOW THIS KIDNAPPER WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU MESS WITH THE ***GOOD GUYS.***

NOW, GO AHEAD, KID-- SAY THE THING.

WAIT, REALLY?!

AVENG--

The outskirts of Queens.

CAN ANYONE HEAR ME?!

UGH, WHY DO **WANNABE SUPERVILLAINS** HAVE TO--UGH--PICK **WEIRD LAIRS** SO FAR AWAY FROM EVERYTHING ELSE?

IF MONTE'S **DUMB MAGIC** WASN'T KEEPING ME FROM GENERATING MY HARD-LIGHT CONSTRUCTS, I'D SHOW **THEM** A TRICK OR--

BOOM!

AH-AH-AH, DON'T EXPEND ALL THAT BEAUTIFUL POTENTIAL ENERGY FLAILING ABOUT, GLOW STICK.

I'M GONNA NEED YOU TO BE A GOOD **HUMAN BATTERY** FOR THE BIG SHOW TONIGHT.

I SAVED YOU THIS **COURTSIDE SEAT,** BUT IF YOU KEEP ACTING UP, I'M PRETTY SURE YOU'LL BE JUST AS USEFUL TO ME UNCONSCIOUS.

WHATEVER YOU'RE PLANNING ISN'T GOING TO WORK, **MAGNETRIX.** MY FRIENDS WILL--

OH, I HAVE A **REAL #$%@$ FUN** SURPRISE FOR THE NEW CHAMPIONS. YOU THINK THE **LAST** BIG GREEN MEANIE WE BROKE OUT OF PRISON WAS A HOOT?

YOU WOULDN'T **BELIEVE** WHAT THE GOVERNMENT'S STILL KEEPING LOCKED UP FROM THAT **INVASION** A ZILLION YEARS AGO.

I RECOGNIZED YOU WHEN YOU HIT ME WITH THAT BLITZ BALL OF YOURS OR WHATEVER, MAGNETRIX.

YOU WERE **MANIPULATED** BY HYDRA JUST LIKE US. WHY DO ALL OF THIS? WHY THROW AWAY YOUR **SECOND CHANCE?**

WANNA KNOW HOW I GOT AWAY FROM OUR TERRIBLE, NO-GOOD CAPTORS, "LIBERTY"?

I DIDN'T HAVE A **SUPER HERO** TO SAVE ME.

I WAS IN THE **MIDDLE** OF A MISSION FOR HYDRA--I'LL SPARE YOU THE DETAILS, BUT IT WASN'T PRETTY, THAT'S FOR #$%& SURE--WHEN ONE OF MY **DISRUPTION ORBS** BOUNCED BACK AND HIT ME IN THE HEAD.

IT FRIED THEIR PROGRAMMING AND MADE ME **PERFECTLY AWARE** OF EVERYTHING I HAD DONE FOR THEM--AND EVERYTHING THEY HAD DONE **TO ME.**

AND, WELL, THE ONLY WAY I COULD HANDLE **THAT** TERRIBLE AWARENESS WAS TO **KEEP DISRUPTING** MYSELF UNTIL IT ALL MADE SENSE. OR NOTHING DID? MAYBE THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE, REALLY.

NOW I FIGURE THE WHOLE **WORLD** SHOULD FEEL AS FREE AND UNINHIBITED AS I AM!

AND FOR THAT, I MIGHT NEED A LITTLE **EXTRA ENERGY BOOST.**

MONTE, HELP--DON'T LET HER--

Liberty's family's house.
Berkeley.

YOUR DAUGHTER IS A ***VERY CAPABLE*** YOUNG HERO, MRS. MONTEIRO.

AND THE ***AVENGERS*** ARE GOING TO DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO HELP THE ***NEW CHAMPIONS*** GET HER BACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

WE LOST HER ONCE, MR. AMERICA. WE JUST CAN'T LOSE HER AGAIN.

THIS IS ***WEIRD***, RIGHT? LIKE, I'M GLAD WE'RE GETTING BACKUP, BUT DON'T THE AVENGERS HAVE A GIANT FLOATING CITY OR WHATEVER? SHOULDN'T WE BE PLANNING ALL THIS ***UP THERE?***

DO YOU THINK MIRANDA'S PARENTS WOULD FEEL COMFORTED IF THE AVENGERS WERE IN THEIR "GIANT FLOATING CITY OR WHATEVER," IZZY?

SOMETIMES, I THINK IT WAS YOU WHO WAS RAISED ALONE IN A TOWER!

PSH, WHATEVER.

THIS HARD-LIGHT TECH IS... ACTUALLY PRETTY IMPRESSIVE.

A LOT BETTER THAN WHAT I'M WORKING WITH AT THE MOMENT. VISION, ARE YOU ABLE TO GET A READ ON THIS FROM AFAR?

IT APPEARS TO POSSESS A UNIQUE ENERGY SIGNAL, IRON MAN.

EVEN WITH THE TRACKING ABILITY DISABLED, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO TRIANGULATE ANY TRACES OF IT STILL ON LIBERTY'S PERSON.

LIB DIDN'T JUST PIONEER THE TECH-- SHE'S GOT A RENEWABLE BATTERY FOR IT ***PERMANENTLY BONDED*** TO HER.

THAT'S GOOD INTEL, KID. GIVES US SOMETHING TO SEARCH FOR ON THE SCIENCE FRONT...

"...SO WE'RE REALLY COVERING ***ALL*** OF OUR BASES NOW."

CAROL--VISION SAYS HE'S GOT A LOCATION NARROWED DOWN TO A QUARTER-MILE RADIUS.

THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?!

Times Square.

"...LET'S GET LIB BACK!"

UHH... MAGGIE?

I JUST FELT A *SERIOUS* MAGICAL PRESENCE CROSS SOME OF MY WARDS.

IT'S MAGNETRIX WHEN I'M COMMITTING ACTS OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM, MONTE.

AND IF YOU DON'T HOLD UP *YOUR* SIDE OF THE PLAN, YOU'RE GOING TO EXPERIENCE SOME OF THOSE ACTS FIRSTHAND.

HEH...TOLD YA MY FRIENDS WOULD COME THROUGH.

"TOLD YA MY FRIENDS WOULD" *BLAH BLAH BLAH.*

HEY, DIDJA KNOW ALL THESE ***SUPER-SKRULL AGENTS*** GOT SPECIAL PROGRAMMING TO HACK THE AVENGERS' POWERS OR WHATEVER?

TURNS OUT MY ORBS SCRAMBLE THOSE GENES UP ***REAL SPICY.***

SHAKOOM

ALL RIGHT, LET'S PAIR OFF AND--

FANTASMA, MOON SQUIRE...YOU MAY HAVE ***UNDERSOLD*** YOUR STREET MAGICIAN.

THAT FRACASADO WAS ***NOT*** PUNCHING IN THIS WEIGHT CLASS LAST TIME.

YEAH, THAT IS ***NOT*** MONTE...

BEHOLD-- THE NEW SUPER-SKRULL CHAMPION!

C'MON, MONTE-- GET THIS ENERGY-TRANSFER SPELL GOING. I DON'T TRUST THAT ***STUPID ALIEN*** TO KEEP THE CAPE CROWD BUSY FOR LONG.

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH ALL OF THIS? I MEAN, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THE HOSPITALS AND--?

MONTE, BABY... AFTER ***ALL*** I'VE BEEN THROUGH, DON'T I ***DESERVE*** TO HAVE A WIDDLE FUN?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE ***ONE*** PERSON WHO UNDERSTOOD ME, THROUGH AND THROUGH...

I DO, BABY, I DO--JUST... BE CAREFUL, IS ALL.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF YOU DRAIN HER BATTERY COMPLETELY. IT COULD ***KILL HER.***

OH WELL!

KRACKLE

YOU'RE... CRAZY...

WHAT TIPPED YOU OFF?

I FEARED THAT ADAPTING THE POWERS OF THESE ***CHILDREN*** WOULD CONSTITUTE A DOWNGRADE, BUT THEY STILL ***PACK A PUNCH!***

POOMPH

YOU'RE TELLING ME! LITTLE HELP, ROLLER GIRL?

AND I ALREADY KNOW HOW TO WIELD THEIR WEAPONS BETTER THAN THESE UNTESTED WHELPS DO!

SWIISH

LOW BLOW--MY POWERS ARE FIFTY-FIFTY CURSE/ BLESSING.

I WILL MAKE YOU A DEAL--HELP ME SHOW THIS ALIEN THE FULL FEROCITY OF WAKANDA, AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR ***YOUR MOTHER*** TO KNOW I SAW YOU HERE.

I WILL TAKE THAT DEAL, MY KING.

YOUR CLAWS CAN'T STRIKE WHAT YOU ***CAN'T SEE,*** BLACK PANTHER.

SO LET'S GO DARK.

AMARANTH-- THE SUPER-SKRULL CHAMPION IS EMITTING A *LIGHT-ABSORPTION* FIELD.

HE'S MIMICKING MOON SQUIRE'S POWERS, WANDA--BUT MOON SQUIRE'S NEVER DONE SOMETHING ON *THIS* SCALE.

PANIC WILL SET IN FAST. WE NEED TO ILLUMINATE THE AREA AND LEAD CIVILIANS AWAY FROM THE DARKNESS.

GLAD YOU'VE GOT SOME SHINE TO YOU, KID.

WHAT DO YOU SAY WE HIT THE SKIES AND SEE IF WE CAN GET A BETTER VIEW OF THIS MESS?

I SAY, *HECK YEAH, CAPTAIN AMERICA!*

UHH, SIR.

VISION, TONY-- CIVILIANS TAKE PRIORITY, BUT WE NEED EYES ON THE NEW CHAMPIONS TOO.

WE MUST NOT LET THE SUPER-SKRULL CHAMPION PICK THEM OFF ONE BY ONE.

I'M TAKING IT PERSONALLY THAT YOU'RE RIPPING OFF MY MOVES.

BUT I GOTTA WONDER...

...DID YOUR *COPYCAT GENES* INFORM YOU THAT THE DARKNESS ALSO--

--IMPROVES MY STRENGTH, SPEED, REFLEXES AND--

--TACTICAL SKILLS-- *WHOA!*

KRAK

SKILL BOOSTS OR *NOT*, I DO NOT APPROVE OF A *KID* WEARING MY COSTUME.

I, UHH... DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE HERE.

MOON SQUIRE-- WE ARE RECONVENING FORCES.

WE'VE DETECTED A GROWING ENERGY ANOMALY ABOVE THE STUBBS TOWER.

GO. I CAN HOLD THE SKRULL OFF.

BUT SERIOUSLY-- YOU KEEP THAT COSTUME ON? *NOTHING GOOD* WILL COME OF IT.

WAS THAT YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH MOON KNIGHT?

YEAH. HE WAS KINDA SCARY.

THAT IS A COMMON ASSESSMENT.

IS THAT ENOUGH CHARGE, MAGG--MAGNETRIX? I *REALLY* THINK TAKING ANY MORE COULD KILL HER...

...OR ME. GETTING WOOZY HERE...

KRACKLE

DOES IT LOOK LIKE I *GIVE A @#$%?!*

IT *REALLY* DOESN'T.

BUT YOUR POOR BOYFRIEND'S SPELLS ARE *WEAKENING.* AND CARING A WHOLE LOT...

AGH!

KRAK

...IS KIND OF MY THING!

BZZOOOMPPH!

AARGGH! YOU RUINED *EVERYTHING!*

YOU GOT A SECOND CHANCE-- AND YOU'RE USING IT TO *LASH OUT* AT PEOPLE?

HOW MANY KIDS ARE *STILL* UNDER HYDRA CONTROL?

WITH YOUR POWERS, YOU COULD FREE THEM WITH A TOUCH!

I HAD TO GET OUT THE *HARD WAY*-- WHY SHOULD ANYONE ELSE HAVE IT EASY?!

WE DON'T ALL GET HEROES COMING TO SAVE US, STAR-@#$%#!

BUT WE CAN *BE THAT* FOR OTHER PEOPLE!

DON'T LECTURE ME! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT *I'VE BEEN THROUGH!*

I'M ONE OF THE *ONLY PEOPLE* WHO DOES! YOU'RE NOT ALO--

BZZZMP

HEY! I GOT YOU.

NOW WE'VE GOTTA GET THAT OTHER GIRL BEFORE SHE--

WOOMPH

OH MY GOD, THAT IS ***SO NOT*** HOW I THOUGHT I'D MEET CAPTAIN AMERICA.

I STILL WANT TO PUNCH MONTE INTO THE FRIGGIN' SUN, BUT WHO THE HECK WAS THAT CRAZY HELMET GIRL?

SHE *ISN'T* CRAZY...SHE JUST GOT *TURNED AROUND.*

ANY ONE OF US COULD HAVE ENDED UP LIKE THAT.

BUT YOU DIDN'T. YOU KIDS HAVE A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD OF YOU.

YEAH, THE WAY YOU HANDLED YOURSELVES OUT THERE?

BZZ

YOU'RE READY FOR *ANYTHING* LIFE THROWS AT YOU.

NO WAY.

HELLRUNE

Jaren--didn't have signal before

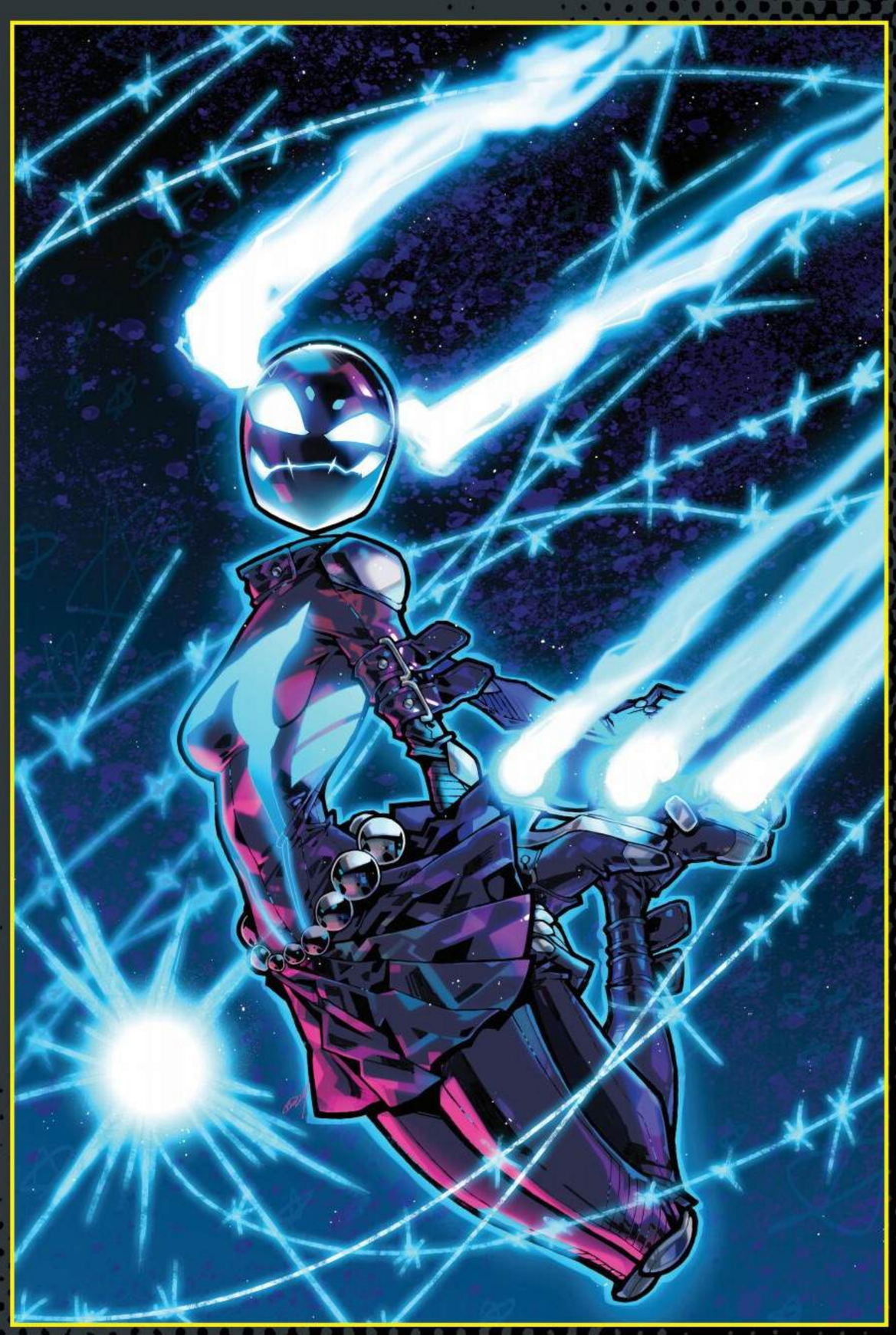
Don't think Veleda is who she seems

NEED UR HELP NOW

#1 VARIANT BY **NICOLETTA BALDARI**

#1 PROMO ART VARIANT BY **LUCIANO VECCHIO**

#1 HOMAGE VARIANT BY **FEDERICO VICENTINI** & **MATT MILLA**



#1 VARIANT BY **ROSE BESCH**

7

Somewhere in Scandinavia...

Don't think Veleda is who she seems

NEED UR HELP NOW

shes takin us to some kind of mgic market for ritual stuff nd im getting scardd what she plans to do

Wait, what? A magic market where???

Don't go with her--we'll come get you ASAP.

Hellrune?????

I HAVE SECURED OUR PASSAGE.

HELLRUNE...ARE YOU NOT YET ***READY*** TO TAKE THESE NEXT STEPS?

DO YOU NOT WISH TO RESTORE OUR FAMILY'S POWER--TO LIGHT THE PATH TO THE ***KNOWLEDGE*** YOU CLAIMED TO SEEK?

IT COST ME ***GREATLY***-- AND THE PRICES WITH WHICH THESE BEINGS BARTER ARE NO ***STANDARD*** CURRENCIES-- BUT WE'VE BEEN GETTING NOWHERE WITH EARTHLY TRINKETS.

WHAT WE CAN FIND IN THE MARKETS WILL HELP HONE YOUR CONNECTION TO THE ***ANCESTRAL MAGICS*** MUCH MORE DIRECTLY.

BUT, ***AUNT VELEDA...*** ALL OF THESE SHRINES WE'VE VISITED, ALL THESE RITUALS--HOW ARE THEY GETTING US CLOSER TO FINDING OUT ABOUT ***MY PARENTS?***

DO YOU NOT ***TRUST ME,*** CHILD?

I, THE ***ONLY*** FAMILY YOU HAVE KNOWN? HAVE I NOT ***CARED FOR YOU*** THESE PAST MANY WEEKS?

AND I WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. HOWEVER, WHERE WE GO NEXT IS PART OF THE ***OLD WORLD--*** MUCH OLDER THAN OURS.

AND WE MUST ***GIVE UP*** ANY TRACES OF MODERNITY TO TREAD THERE.

BUT...IT'S THE ONLY WAY MY FRIENDS CAN REACH ME.

YOUR "FRIENDS" WERE ALL TOO WILLING TO SEE YOU GO, HELLRUNE. AND YOU ARE ***BETTER OFF*** WITHOUT THEM.

SOON, YOU WILL BE ***POSSESSED*** BY YOUR TRUE FAMILY.

THERE'S A GOOD GIRL.

WOOSH

NOW LET US TARRY NO LONGER.

VSHK

VSHK

VSHK

Liberty's garage.
Berkeley, California.

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING BEFORE, BUT I'VE BEEN ***CHECKING IN*** WITH HELLRUNE EVER SINCE SHE LEFT. WHEN SHE HAS SIGNAL, ANYWAY.

AWW, THAT'S REALLY SWEET.

BUT NOW ***EVERYTHING*** IS BOUNCING BACK. I DON'T KNOW IF VELEDA CAUGHT HER OR WHAT, BUT HER NUMBER DOESN'T EXIST. SO ALL WE'VE GOT TO GO ON IS "MAGIC MARKET."

I ***TOLD YOU*** THAT WOMAN WAS EVIL. NAME ONE GOOD PERSON WHO WEARS A FREAKING ANTLER CROWN. ONE!

THERE ARE MAGIC MARKETS WITH DOORWAYS ***ALL OVER*** THE HUMAN WORLD, BUT THEIR EVER-CHANGING GEOGRAPHY DOESN'T REFLECT OURS.

WITHOUT A ***KNOWLEDGEABLE GUIDE,*** IT'S LIKE TRYING TO FIND ONE STAR IN THE COSMOS.

CAN'T THE ***SCARLET WITCH*** GIVE US DIRECTIONS? OR WRITE US A RECOMMENDATION TO ***DOCTOR STRANGE*** OR SOMETHING?

DOCTOR STRANGE IS...NOT IN THIS REALM. HE FLED AFTER DOCTOR DOOM BECAME ***SORCERER SUPREME.****

AND HANDLING ***THAT*** IS ALSO TAKING A LOT OF WANDA'S ATTENTION RIGHT NOW.

(UNDERSTANDABLY.)

*CHECK OUT ***DOCTOR STRANGE OF ASGARD!*** --ALANNA

UGH... I THINK I KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT MESS WITH THIS STUFF.

BUT I REALLY, ***REALLY*** DID NOT WANT TO HAVE TO HIT HIM UP AGAIN.

EYES WIDE, EVERYONE. I'M ABOUT TO BRING HER DOWN.

WE HAVE GOT TO--=YAWN=--WORK OUT A MORE CONSISTENT TELEPORTATION SYSTEM.

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO LAND A JET-PUNCH WHEN I'M JET-LAGGED?

NO ONE APPRECIATES A TEENAGER BUILDING A HIGH-SPEED, RENEWABLE-ENERGY AIRCRAFT ***IN HER GARAGE,*** HUH?

Manchester, England.

LIB, CAN YOU ACTIVATE THE ***STAR-SPINNER'S*** INVISIBILITY SO WE DON'T FREAK THE CITY OUT?

A HIGH-SPEED, RENEWABLE-ENERGY AIRCRAFT THAT CAN ***BECOME INVISIBLE!***

COOL, NOT CONSPICUOUS AT ALL.

UH, WHERE ARE WE MEETING YOUR FRIEND AGAIN?

HE'S ***NOT*** MY FRIEND.

AND ANNOYINGLY... HE SAID ***HE'D*** FIND US.

LISTEN, **MARSHALL** AND I MET ON AN ENCRYPTED CHAT FOR **DEEP**, DEEP-DIVE WEIRDNESS.

THIS WAS AFTER MY WHOLE **"POSSESSED BY A DIGITAL EGYPTIAN GOD"** PROBLEM, SO I WAS LOOKING **ANYWHERE** I COULD FOR HELP, AND HE HAD A REP FOR KNOWING EVERYTHING THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT **OCCULT** STUFF.

HE **CLAIMED** HIS GREAT GRANDDAD TRAINED **BLADE, THE VAMPIRE HUNTER,** BUT I DON'T KNOW... I NEVER REALLY BOUGHT IT.

AND WHY DID YOUR FRIENDSHIP WEAKEN?

WHEN I FIGURED OUT I GOT **POWERS** FROM THAT WHOLE ORDEAL, MARSHALL TRIED TO **EXORCISE** ME OVER ZOOM.

SAID I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO **HANDLE** IT.

BUT I'M PRETTY SURE HE JUST WANTED MY ABILITIES FOR HIMSELF.

SCREECH

HE WAS JEALOUS THAT I--**WHOA!**

MOON SQUIRE!

I *WILL* PUNCH A BUNCH OF BATS--DON'T THINK I WON'T!

WAIT, YOU'RE A *VAMPIRE* NOW?

ALRIGHT? SO TELL YOUR BESSIES TO PUT AWAY THE STAKES.

MARSHALL AFARI.

BUT YOU CAN CALL ME *NIGHTDRIFTER.*

UHH, JAREN--YOU LEFT OUT A PRETTY BIG DETAIL!

I DIDN'T KNOW--WE ONLY TALKED TO EACH OTHER ONLINE!

WERE YOU *ALWAYS* A VAMPIRE?!

HALF VAMP--CHECK THE NEWTONS.

GOT BIT DURING THE ***BLOOD HUNT.*** REAL MINGIN' SUCKER TRIED TO MAKE US A MEAL, BUT I WARDED OFF A FULL TRANSFORMATION.

KEPT SOME PERKS THOUGH.

FSSSSHHHH

C'MON, MAN.

WE'RE ALL THINKING THE SAME THING, RIGHT?

YEAH, HE'S HOT AS HELL.

I CAN'T OPPOSE THAT.

I CAN.

OKAY, WELL, I'M GLAD YOU'RE NOT ***COMPLETELY UNDEAD*** OR WHATEVER.

YOU GOT MY MESSAGE ABOUT THE MAGIC MARKET, RIGHT? CAN YOU HELP US OR NOT?

SOZ, I CAN'T DO NOWT UNTIL I'M INTRODUCED TO EVERYONE COMIN' WIT US ON THE JOURNEY.

*LIBERTY-FANTASMA-CADETMARVEL-GOLDTIGER-AMARANTH--**NOW CAN WE GO?***

PROPER FIT!

YOU TOO, MATE.

OH, UHH... THANKS?

RIGHT, LET'S GO FOR A MOOCH 'ROUND TOWN.

WAS HE FLIRTING WITH ME OR YOU?

HEY, A COMPLIMENT'S A COMPLIMENT.

BUT THE ***LAST*** STREET MAGICIAN YOU THOUGHT WAS CUTE ***KIDNAPPED YOU,*** SO MAYBE KEEP THAT IN MIND.

UGH, BUZZKILL.

ARE YOU SURE THIS BIG MAGICAL MARKET IS OUT HERE ***AWAY*** FROM THE CITY CENTER? FEELS KIND OF COUNTERINTUITIVE...

NO, NIGHTDRIFTER'S LEADING US IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION...I CAN SENSE ENERGIES COALESCING NEARBY.

THE BIRD IN PURPLE GETS IT.

LOOK, WHEN WE GET INSIDE, THERE ARE ***RULES*** TO FOLLOW.

DON'T AGREE TO ANYTHIN' ANYONE SAYS, EVEN IN PASSIN'. DEALS ARE DEAD ***BINDIN'.***

DON'T TELL ANYONE YOUR REAL NAME--THOSE HAVE ***POWER.*** AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL...

...DON'T ***EMBARRASS ME***--I GOT A REPUTATION, YEAH?

RIGHT DOWN THIS GINNEL.

WOULDN'T 'AVE GUESSED, WOULD YOU?

ALRIGHT, LET'S 'AVE IT!

FSSSHHHH

WELCOME TO THE ***SHADOWPLAY ARCADE***--OUR HUMBLE LOCAL NODE OF THE WORLDWIDE MAGIC MARKET.

I FEEL DIZZY.

YOU NEVER REALLY GET USED TO IT.

SO SHINY...

KEEP THEM PAWS TO YERSELF, KITTY-CAT.

REMEMBER, I GOT A REPUTATION TO UPHOLD--

NIGHTDRIFTER?! IZZAT YOU?!

UH-OH.

YER BOLD ENOUGH TO SHOW YER FACE HERE AGAIN AFTER WHAT YE ***STOLE FROM ME?!***

I TAKE IT THAT'S NOT A VAMP BUDDY OF YOURS?

THAT'S ***KOMAKINO.*** NO ONE'S MATE ON A ***GOOD*** DAY.

POTION I WAS WORKIN' ON NEEDED ***"WOOL OF BAT."*** I SWEAR DOWN, I THOUGHT IT'D ***GROW BACK*** BY NOW. NO HARM, NO FOUL.

I'LL BLEED ALL OF YOU BLOOD BAGS DRY!

HARM! FOUL!

PEG IT!

I SAID IT BEFORE AND I'LL SAY IT AGAIN--I ***WILL*** HIT A BAT.

AS LOATH AS I AM TO FIGHT YOUR FIGHT ***FOR YOU,*** YOUR GRUDGE BEARER IS NO MATCH FOR ALL OF US TOGETHER.

WHAT IT IS, RIGHT, THERE ARE RULES 'BOUT FIGHTIN' IN THE MARKET.

WE CAN'T HIT HIM UNLESS HE HITS US ***FIRST...***

...AND WE DO ***NOT*** WANT TO GET HIT FIRST.

SCREEECH

I'M HERE TO ***FIND HELLRUNE.*** IF I HAVE TO DEAL WITH ***YOUR GUANO*** TO DO IT, I'M READY.

OUR KID'S GOT MORE FIRE THAN I REMEMBER!

RIGHT, THERE MIGHT BE ***ONE WAY*** TA GET 'IM OFF OUR CASE. IT'LL ***COST US***--AND YER FRIENDS WILL NEED TA HOLD 'IM OFF.

WE'RE ALL HERE FOR THE SAME REASON, BLADE JR.

LEAD THE WAY.

MR. FOXE

YE CAN'T HIDE FROM ME, NIGHTDRIFTER!

COME OUT SO I CAN TAKE A LITTLE OFF THE TOP!

YO, FANG-FACE-- I LEFT MY CLIPPERS AT HOME, BUT HOW ABOUT I FINISH THAT TRIM WITH MY ***FISTS?!***

WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN--?

SHABOOM

BRACE FOR-- HNHH-- IMPACT!

PLEASE TELL ME THAT MEANS WE CAN HIT HIM BACK?

ᑭᑕᕮᗰᖴᗰᐤ ᑕᖵᕮᗰᖵ

I THINK THEY SAID THAT COUNTS!

ALL RIGHT, NEW CHAMPIONS-- LET'S LET HIM "'AVE IT"!

YO, GUTZ! I NEED A SPECIAL BREW.

GAH!

CLINK CLACK

IF IT'S POSSIBLE TO CONCOCT, THEN I'VE GOT IT IN STOCK.

BUT YOU'RE A ***POOR CUSTOMER,*** NIGHTDRIFTER. YOUR TAB IS TOO LONG AS IT IS.

JAREN! WOT'D I SAY ABOUT DEALS--?

ACCEPTABLE. I REQUEST ***SEVEN GOOD DAYS.***

WHAT KIND OF CURRENCY IS THAT?

I'LL ***PAY,*** THEN. WE'RE IN A HURRY.

UGH, MATE. COULD MEAN ***MEMORIES*** OF THE BEST DAYS YOU'VE EVER SPENT, SNAPPED OUT YER MIND.

COULD MEAN SEVEN GOOD DAYS TA COME YOU'LL ***NEVER*** HAVE NOW.

PART OF THE BARGAIN'S ***NOT KNOWING.***

¡ESE MURCIÉLAGO ES DEMASIADO FUERTE!

THEN GET ***STRONGER***--YOU GOTTA HOLD HIM STILL FOR ME TO PUNCH HIM!

SCREEEEECH

ARRGHH!

WHOA!

OOF!

LET US MEET CLAW FOR CLAW IN THE SKY!

THAT IS SO INTENSE.

STOP!

FINALLY-- ENOUGH WITH THE APPETIZERS.

GIMME THE MAIN COURSE!

DRINK UP, UGLY!

POOOF

WOT'S THIS?

I'M...I'M BEAUTIFUL. I GOT ME HAIR BACK!

YER SPARED THIS TIME, NIGHTDRIFTER!

BUT STAY AWAY FROM ME LUSCIOUS LOCKS!

WE ALMOST DIED OVER THAT?

ABSOLUTE SCENES, ALL THAT.
YEAH, SUPER FUN.
SOZ FOR SLOWIN' DOWN THE SEARCH THOUGH. I DO WANT TO FIND YER HELLRUNE, FOR WOT IT'S WORTH. I KNOW YOU FANCIED HER.
I'D DO THE SAME FOR ANY OF MY FRIENDS, MAN.
SURE, MATE, SURE. IF ANYONE CAN FIND HER, IT'S SISTER RAY 'ERE.
SISTER RAY, MIND CASTIN' A GLANCE FOR ME?
ANYTHING AT ALL FOR YOU, DEAREST ONE.
THANKS-- TREAT THIS ONE LIKE HE'S FAMILY, YEAH?
RIGHT, TIME FOR ME TO DO ONE.
YOU'RE LEAVING? HOW DO WE GET OUT OF HERE?
YOU WALK BACK OUT THIS DOOR, YOU'LL BE ON THE TOWN STREETS AGAIN.
WELL, THANKS. IF WE FIND HER... I GUESS I'LL OWE YOU ONE.
NOW YER CATCHIN' ON.
RIGHT, UHM-- WE'RE LOOKING FOR OUR FRIEND, HELLRUNE. SHE--
OH, NO NEED TO EXPLAIN, SWEETIE.
JUST HOLD YOUR HAND OUT.
BLEAARGGH...
PLOP PLOP PLOP

THEY *ARE* HERE!

CRACK

NO, NO-- THE FIRST EGG SHOWS THE *RECENT PAST.* YOUR MISSING GIRL AND HER GOVERNESS FOUND WHAT THEY SOUGHT AND PASSED THROUGH THE MARKET.

LISTEN NOW, CLOSELY, TO *THE PRESENT,* AND THEN--WHAT'S *TO COME.*

"ICELAND" IS SUCH AN *UNINSPIRED* NAME FOR THIS REGION, DON'T YOU THINK, HELLRUNE?

CRACK

CENTURIES AGO, THIS IS WHERE OUR ANCESTOR WITCHES FELT THE VEIL WAS THINNEST BETWEEN MIDGARD AND *NIFFLEHEIM,* THE LAND OF THE DEAD.

CRACK

AND SO IT IS WHERE YOU WILL AT LAST *FULFILL YOUR FATE* AND SUMMON *HELA, QUEEN OF THE DEAD!*

#1 VARIANT BY **PEACH MOMOKO**

8

"ICELAND" IS SUCH AN UNINSPIRED NAME FOR THIS REGION, DON'T YOU THINK, HELLRUNE?

CENTURIES AGO, THIS IS WHERE OUR ANCESTOR WITCHES FELT THE VEIL WAS THINNEST BETWEEN MIDGARD AND ***NIFFLEHEIM,*** THE LAND OF THE DEAD.

LAND OF THE DEAD...VELEDA, DID YOU BRING ME HERE BECAUSE MY PARENTS ARE--?

OH, YES, THEY'RE ***QUITE*** DECEASED.

SURELY YOU WERE NEVER SO NAIVE TO THINK THEY WERE STILL ***ALIVE?***

BUT DON'T FRET, CHILD--YOU MAY SEE THEM SOON ENOUGH.

WHOOSH

UNHH!

I FOOLISHLY TRIED TO DO THIS THE ***COMPASSIONATE*** WAY, LEADING YOU TO BELIEVE THIS JOURNEY WAS ***YOUR*** CHOICE.

BUT YOU'RE JUST ***TOO WEAK*** TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT MUST BE DONE.

I ***TRUSTED*** YOU! YOU SAID YOU WERE--HNHH-- MY FAMILY!

AND IT WASN'T A ***TERRIBLY*** BOLD LIE--I DID ***KNOW*** YOUR PARENTS. THEY ***PERISHED*** ATTEMPTING THE SAME RITUAL I AM ON THE CUSP OF COMPLETING.

MY COVEN HAS LONG SOUGHT DOMINION OVER ***DEATH ITSELF...***

...BY SUMMONING ***HELA,*** QUEEN OF THE UNDERWORLD, AND BENDING HER TO OUR WILL.

NOW, AT LONG LAST, THE HOUR IS ***AT HAND.***

NO!

OUR TRIP TO THE MARKETS WAS FRUITFUL.

THOUGH I WAS LOATH TO APPEAL TO ***LESSER*** FAITHS, I UNDERSTAND NOW THAT MAKING UP FOR ***YOUR*** DEFICIENCIES DEMANDS EVOKING OTHER HELL LORDS.

A TOOTH FROM SATANNISH. PLUTO'S CAPE CLASP. DAIMON HELLSTROM'S TRIDENT TINE AND A GLASS BEARING HIS SISTER SATANA'S KISS. A VOIDED CONTRACT WITH MEPHISTO.

OBJECTS STILL WARM FROM THE ***FLAMES OF HELLS,*** TO ATTRACT THE PROPER RESONANCES.

TO WHICH I NOW ADD *HELREGINN,* THE *SPEAR OF HELA!*

IF ALL YOU NEEDED-- HNHH--WAS *MY SPEAR,* THEN WHY BRING ME ALONG AT ALL?

WHY BE SUCH A RAGING--?

KRAKK

NOW, NOW-- *MANNERS,* CHILD. AND IT'S QUITE SIMPLE. THE RITUAL REQUIRES A *HOST.*

WHAT GOOD TO ME IS *ETERNAL LIFE* IF HELA IS POSSESSING *MY* BODY?

INSTEAD, *YOU* WILL FULFILL THE ROLE YOUR PARENTS ALWAYS *INTENDED* FOR YOU...

...TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN AN *EMPTY VESSEL* FOR A POWER FAR GREATER THAN YOURSELF.

Meanwhile...

WE *HAVE* TO FIND HER!

HEY, MAN--WE WILL.

BUT MAYBE *COOL IT* AND LET LIBERTY FOCUS ON DRIVING SO WE DON'T SPLAT INTO A MOUNTAINSIDE FIRST?

THANKS, CADET. NO BACKSEAT PILOTING, MOON SQUIRE!

A SURGE OF MAGICAL ENERGY--WE'RE CLOSE.

YES, PERHAPS TOO CLOSE, AMARANTH!

EVERYONE, *HOLD ON!*

KRACKLE

PMMPF

WHA--IS EVERYONE OKAY?

NOT YOUR SMOOTHEST LANDING, LIB, BUT GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

FIVE-STAR RATING FROM ME.

I DON'T THINK THE *STAR-SPINNER'S* TAKING US ANY CLOSER TO HELLRUNE...

AMARANTH, CAN YOU SENSE IF WE LANDED NEAR TO HER?

WE'RE ***VERY CLOSE*** TO A LARGE MAGICAL PRESENCE, BUT IT FEELS... SCATTERED. AND ***MALIGN.*** AS IF--

AHH! AS IF WE LANDED IN ANOTHER ***MAGIC-ICE-ZOMBIE GRAVEYARD?!***

BURST!

SO, MY PARENTS AND THE REST OF YOUR COVEN ARE ALL GONE AND DUSTED, *HUH?*

THEN WHAT GOOD IS ***LIVING FOREVER*** IF YOU'RE ALL ALONE? YOU REALLY WANT ETERNITY TO JUST WANDER AROUND AS SOME OUTCAST LOSER?

I'VE BEEN ON MY OWN, VELEDA-- IT ***SUCKED.***

A ***POOR*** ATTEMPT AT MIND GAMES, GIRL.

AND A POINT BETTER MADE, PERHAPS, IF YOUR "FRIENDS" WERE NOT SO EAGER TO LEAVE YOU IN THE HANDS OF A ***STRANGER.***

AHH!

FWOOOMP

TO ***REPLACE*** YOU WITH ANOTHER SORCERESS MORE ***IN CONTROL*** OF HER POWERS.

WHEN YOU CONSIDER ALL OF THAT, THIS IS A ***MERCY,*** REALLY.

IS IT NOT A ***GRAND DESTINY*** TO GIVE YOUR PATHETIC LIFE IN SERVICE OF THE ***GODDESS OF DEATH*** HERSELF?

AHH, GET IT OFF ME--GET IT OFF ME!

HEEEELLLLAAAAAAA...

WHIP-

POOF

UH-UH, WE'RE NOT DOING UNDEAD BRUJAS.

I AM SORRY TO SAY, FANTASMA--IT SEEMS THAT WE ARE DOING JUST THAT.

HEEELLAAAAA...

OKAY, NEW CHAMPIONS-- WE'RE PROS AT HANDLING THE UNDEAD NOW, MYSTICALLY ENHANCED OR OTHERWISE. SO LET'S--

NOT TO CUT YOU OFF, FEARLESS LEADER, BUT DON'T YOU HAVE A LOST LIGHTNING BOLT TO SAVE?

I THINK GOLD TIGER AND I CAN SCORCH THESE ROTTERS. RIGHT, BEEBS?

THEY WILL BE *TATTERED SHREDS* IN NO TIME!

ARE YOU SURE? THERE ARE A LOT OF--

GO, GO!

YOU HEARD THEM, NEW CHAMPIONS-- LET'S GET OUR GIRL!

YOU READY?

PSH, YOU KNOW ME BETTER THAN TO ASK, KITTY CAT.

HELL YEAH!

SHHLLK

WHHP

WHAT IS HAPPENING?!

YES! YES!

WHO DARES?!

HOW ABOUT, NO FREAKING WAY.

YOU.

HELLRUNE! WE CAME AS FAST AS WE COULD. I'M SO SORRY WE EVER LET YOU LEAVE WITH THAT WEIRD WITCHY WOMAN.

DUDE, APOLOGIES CAN WAIT. LET'S GET HER OUT OF--

YOU...

GAK.

YOU KNOW THE TOUCH OF DEATH.

HELLRUNE...?

HA! THE SUMMONING IS *COMPLETE!* THE *GIRL* IS GONE AND ONLY THE *GODDESS* REMAINS-- FOR *ME* TO COMMAND!

IT'S *THE SPEAR,* LIBERTY--THAT'S THE LOCUS OF THE GOD ENERGY!

THAT MUST BE--MMFF-- HOW SHE'S CONTROLLING HELA!

TROUBLE ME NO MORE, CEASELESS GNATS--I'VE A DEITY TO *BRING TO HEEL.*

FWASHOOOM

KEEP YOUR WICKED OLD CLAWS TO YOURSELF, MA'AM!

NO! YOU'LL NOT RUIN THIS!

THE SPEAR.

YOU THINK YOU CAN ESCAPE MY SIGHT?

CAW!

CAW! CAW!

POOF

WHOEVER HOLDS THIS CONTROLS THE GODDESS OF DEATH--THAT'S THE DEAL?

THEN I SAY LET--*HRRNN*--CADET MARVEL GO...

YOU DARE... COMMAND ME...

=GASP=

...AND GET THE *HELA*...

...OUT OF OUR FRIEND'S BODY!

KRACKLE

AHHH!

AHHH!

UHH... HEY, GUYS.

RUNIE! YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH WE MISSED YOU.

YOU-- YOU DID?

DUH. ESPECIALLY JAREN. DUDE IS DOWN BAD.

EMILIO! SHUT UP!

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING TO KNOW SOMEONE MY AGE WHO PRACTICES THE MAGIC ARTS.

THEY TELL ME YOU ARE ALSO A FIERCE FIGHTER!

AND I NEED SOMEONE ELSE WITH A LITTLE EDGE AROUND HERE TO TOUGHEN UP THE PLACE.

WE ARE NOT FINISHED HERE.

I WILL NOT ABIDE CHILDREN HOLDING SUCH POWER OVER ME.

HELREGINN... THAT MEANS "RULER OVER HEL," RIGHT?

I NEVER ***ASKED*** FOR POWER, AND I CERTAINLY NEVER ASKED FOR POWER ***OVER*** ANYONE.

I'VE READ ENOUGH WIKI ARTICLES TO KNOW ***YOUR FAMILY TREE*** IS PRETTY MESSED UP, HELA.

SO MAYBE YOU CAN APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT I JUST LEARNED ***MY PARENTS*** ONLY HAD ME SO YOU COULD ***POSSESS ME*** OR WHATEVER.

THEN YOU ARE A WEAPON AGAINST ME THAT CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO--

HEY, "RULER" HERE, REMEMBER?

I GET TO TALK FIRST.

AND I SAY...I WILL ***RELEASE YOU*** FROM MY CONTROL, SO LONG AS YOU ***PROMISE*** TO LEAVE ME AND MY FRIENDS AND ***ANYONE*** RELATED TO US ALONE.

CHICA-- THIS IS A ***LITERAL*** DEAL WITH A ***GENUINE*** DEVIL.

NO, IT'S ***UNDOING*** THE DEAL MY "FAMILY" ALREADY MADE.

DON'T YOU DARE! OUR COVEN HAS WORKED FOR ***CENTURIES*** TO BIND HELA!

YOU CAN'T ***THROW THAT AWAY*** AND FORSAKE YOUR FAMILY LINE, YOU UNGRATEFUL BRAT!

THIS ONE. IS SHE RELATED TO YOU?

SHE MEANS ***ABSOLUTELY NOTHING*** TO ME AT ALL.

THEN I ACCEPT THE TERMS OF YOUR BARGAIN.

THOUGH I SENSE A MUCH MORE INTERESTING DESTINY LIES AHEAD FOR YOU, GIRL.

NO THANKS-- I'M *ALL SET* ON DESTINIES FOR NOW.

WHOOOSH

G-GODDESS?

YOU AND YOUR SISTER WITCHES SOUGHT ETERNAL LIFE FROM ME?

"SURELY, WE CAN COME TO A COMPROMISE."

HELLRUUUUUUNE...

Berkeley, California.
The home of Liberty...

MIRANDA, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

...AND, AS OF TODAY, HELLRUNE.

SAY, "I CAN'T WAIT TO BICKER ABOUT WHO'S SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME IN THE BATHROOM IN THE MORNING."

OR "IS IT GOING TO BE WEIRD WHEN JAREN COMES OVER TO TAKE ME OUT ON DATES AND NOT TO RUN TRAINING SIMULATIONS WITH YOU, LIB?"

I'M SERIOUS. WE'VE ALL BEEN THROUGH A LOT, BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO PUSHED EVERYONE ***AWAY***... AND YOU ALL STILL PULLED ME ***BACK.***

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT ***FRIENDS*** ARE FOR. I'VE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN KIDS OUR AGE WITH MESSED-UP STORIES ***DON'T*** GET THAT KIND OF SUPPORT.

HER NAME'S MAGNETRIX-- SHE'LL PROBABLY TRY TO KILL YOU SOMEDAY.

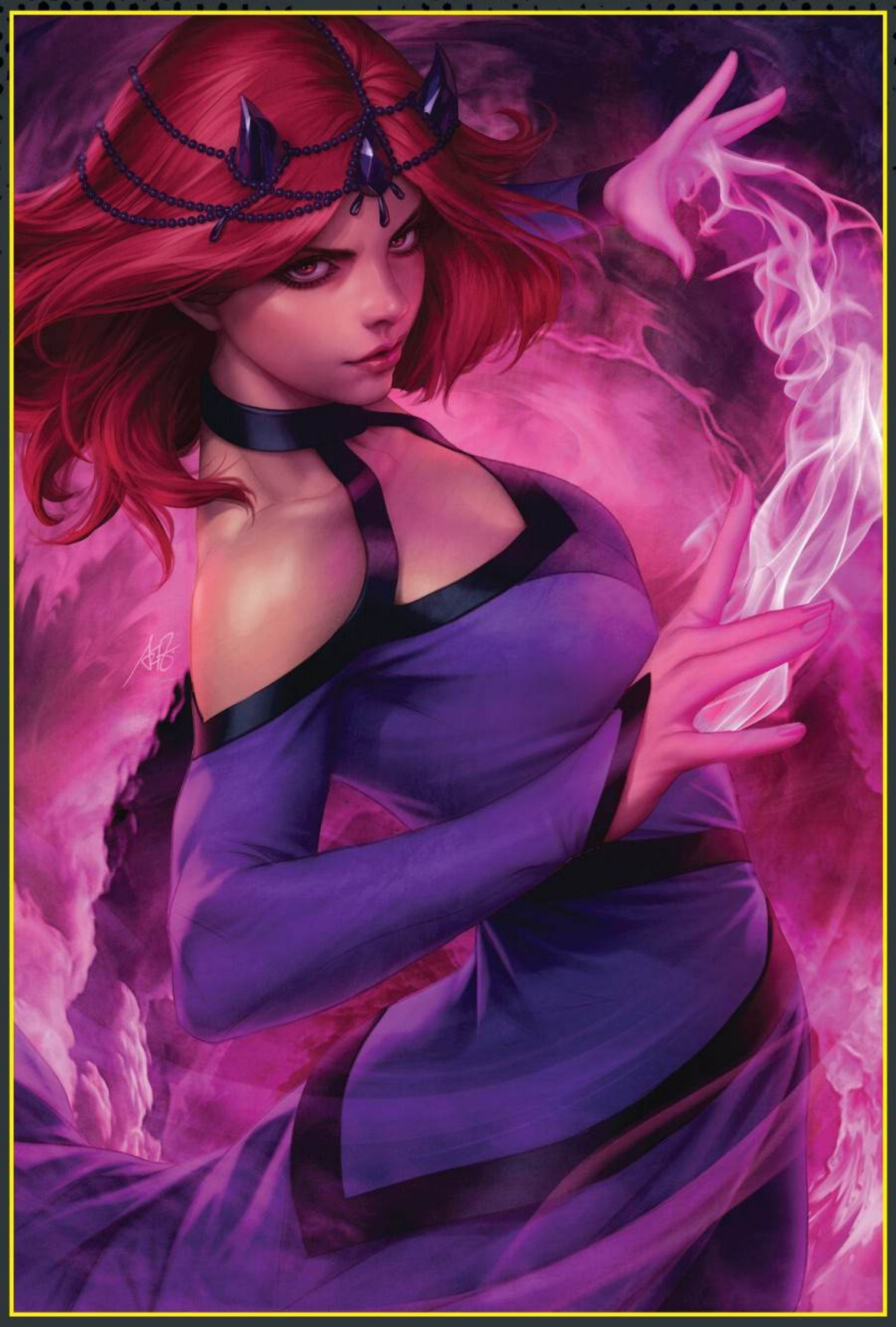
LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW IF THE NEW CHAMPIONS CAN ***CHANGE THE WORLD.***

WE CAN FIGHT LIKE HECK TO TRY.

YES! LOVE THAT ENERGY. AND AS LONG AS WE DO IT AS A FAMILY AND WE'RE HERE FOR EACH OTHER?

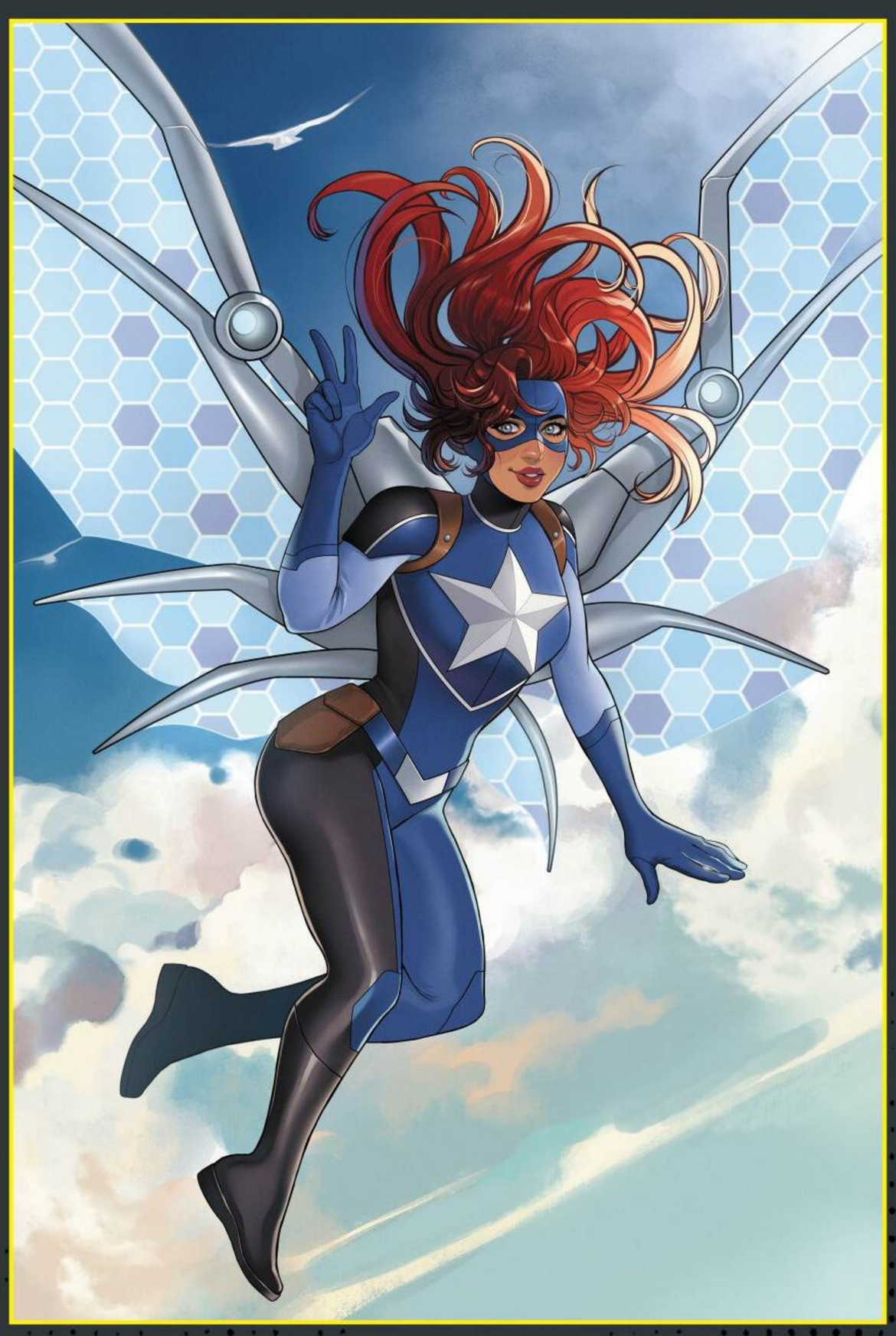
"THAT'S A WIN IN MY BOOK."

THE END FOR NOW!

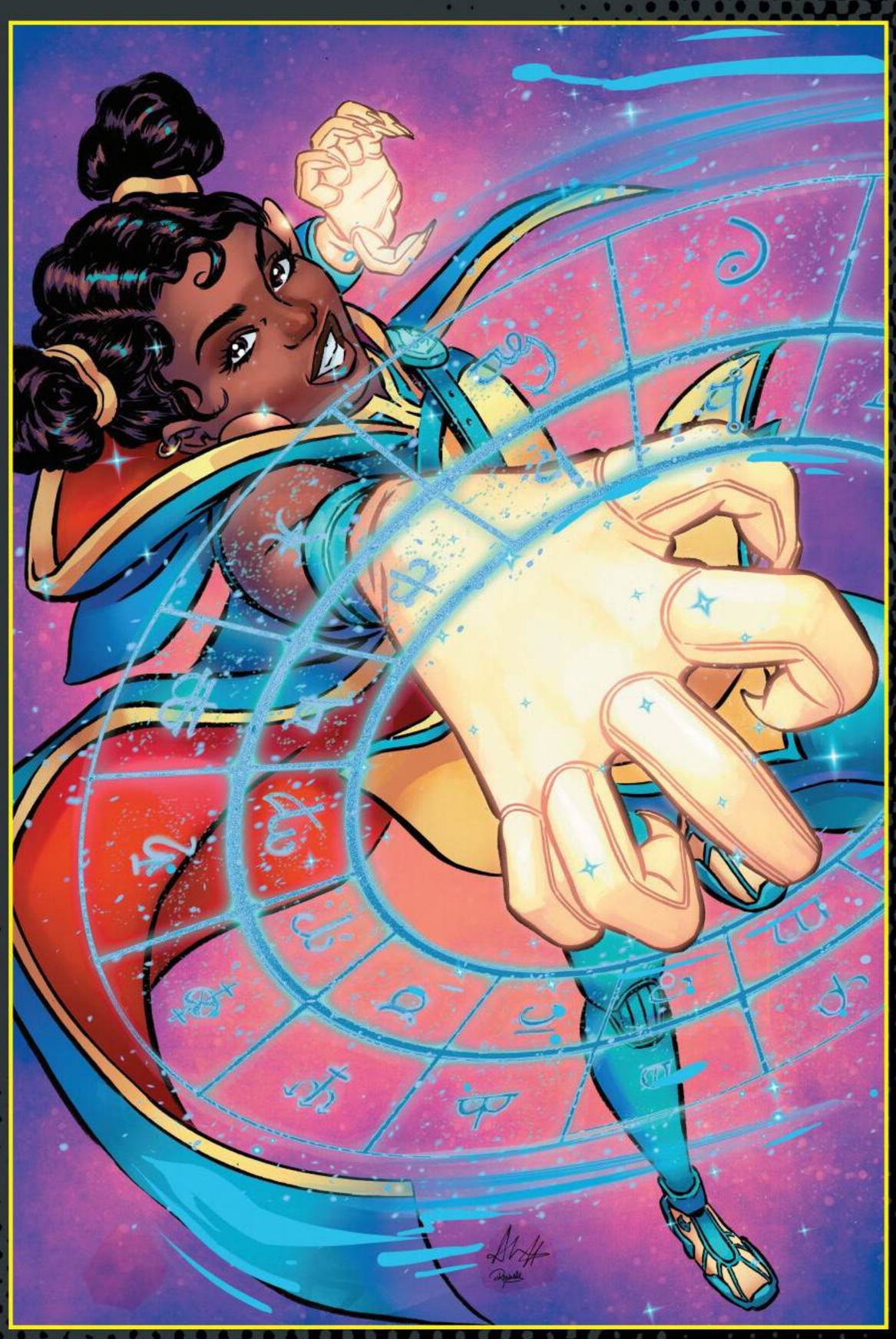


#1 VARIANT BY **STANLEY "ARTGERM" LAU**

#1 VARIANT BY
PACO MEDINA & **JESUS ABURTOV**

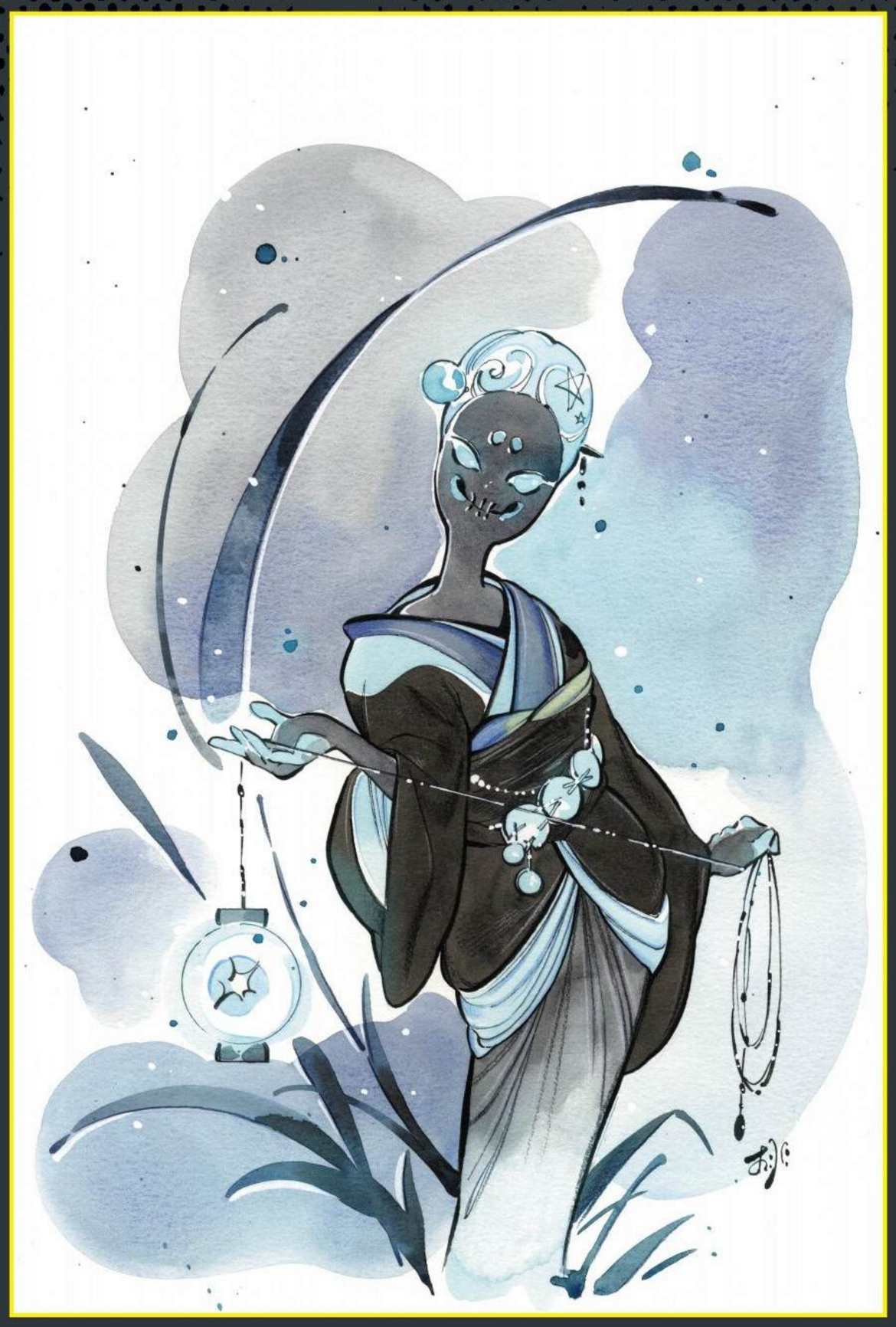


#2 VARIANT BY **ROMY JONES**



#2 BLACK HISTORY MONTH VARIANT BY
ALITHA E. MARTINEZ & **RACHELLE ROSENBERG**

#2 VARIANT BY **DERRICK CHEW**



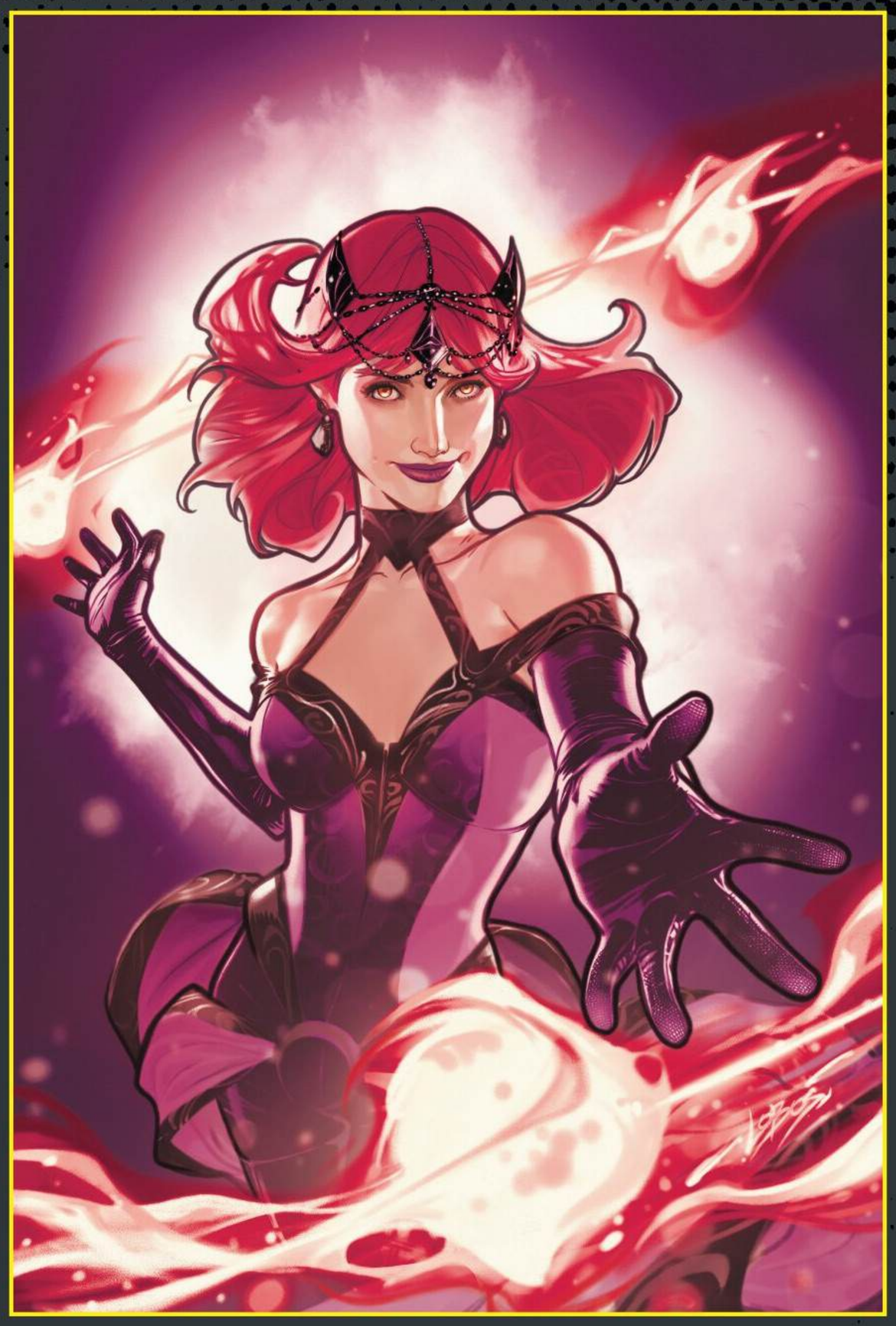
#3 KIMONO VARIANT BY **PEACH MOMOKO**

#3 VARIANT BY **DERRICK CHEW**

#3 VARIANT BY
CLARICE "SAOWEE" MENGUITO

#3 REUNION VARIANT BY
HUMBERTO RAMOS & EDGAR DELGADO

#4 VARIANT BY **RIAN GONZALES**



#4 VARIANT BY **PABLO VILLALOBOS**

#5 VARIANT BY
RICKIE YAGAWA & **NOLAN WOODARD**

#5 VARIANT BY **NAO FUJI**

#6 PRIDE VARIANT BY **MEGHAN HETRICK**

#6 VARIANT BY
EDWIN GALMON & ANDREW DALHOUSE

#7 VARIANT BY **MATEUS MANHANINI**

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